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DUNDAS STREET
Waterdown

1793-1993

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The Waterdown East Flamborough
Heritage Society

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Dundas Street

During the Summer months of 1992 and 1993 with the reconstruction of Highway #5 or Dundas Street, the core of the Village of Waterdown was a permanent scene of potholes, construction equipment and very unhappy motorists. Few people who travelled along this much-used road were aware that this is almost certainly the oldest highway in the Province of Ontario. In 1993 this historic roadway celebrated the Bicentennial of its opening.

Dedicated to the memory of
Mrs. Eilene Barbara Kennedy,
one of the founding members of
The Watertown-East Flamborough
Heritage Society who worked
tirelessly to preserve the
Heritage of the Village of Watertown.

Foreword

In 1993, The Waterdown-East Flamborough Heritage Society proudly celebrated its 20th Anniversary as a community organization in the Town of Flamborough. Founded to ensure that the local history of the two original communities would not be lost with their elimination through the move to Regional Government on January 1 1974, the Society has grown from a group of dedicated local citizens who met to form the organization, to one that now receives support from members across Canada and the U.S.A.

The Society's Anniversary coincided with two other events, the provincial celebrations of the 200th Anniversary of the opening of the first section of Dundas Street in October 1793 and the completion of the reconstruction and upgrading of Highway #5 (Dundas Street) through the Village of Waterdown. To commemorate all three occasions, the idea of an exhibition of past and present photographs depicting Dundas Street, Waterdown was proposed.

Mrs. Maxine Schaltess, Mr. Maurice Green and Mr. Robert Wray (then Society Directors) accepted the responsibility for the planning of an exhibition to be entitled, "Present Images of Dundas Street Past 1793-1993". Streetscapes, buildings and businesses along Dundas Street were photographed throughout the Spring and Summer of 1993 by Mr. Maurice Green.

Two local high school students were hired to assist with all the preliminary work necessary to mount the Exhibition. The Wray attending Guido de Brès High School, Hamilton was given the responsibility of locating historical photographs of buildings, businesses and events along the road. Lori Dodman, a graduate of Waterdown District High School was hired to research the history behind the chosen photographs. Many long time residents of the village spent an afternoon reminiscing about this section of Dundas Street, and Society members and friends loaned additional photographs that were copied for the exhibition.

At the end of the Summer the photographs and text were compiled by Mr. Green and the Society's Archivist Sylvia Wray and arranged into a set of forty plates for a display that would allow visitors to take a stroll along historic Dundas Street. To enhance the exhibition, local artist, Mrs. Patricia Green designed a map identifying the various buildings and sites that were on display.

On Thursday, October 28 1993, Mr. Peter Vance, the Society's first President officially opened the three day Exhibition at Grace Anglican Church Parish Hall on Mill Street North. To the delight of the Society's Board of Directors, the Exhibition was an overwhelming success with many people returning for a second visit. The Guest Book recorded visitors from throughout the Hamilton-Burlington and Golden Horseshoe area reflecting the interest of people in such a unique project. As a result of the numerous comments about the value of such an exhibition to the community's history, the Society decided that the photographs should become a permanent record of the history of Dundas Street, Waterdown.

Retaining the same format of historical photographs matched with present day ones and accompanied by a brief text Mr. Green and Mrs. Wray undertook the task of transforming the exhibition plates into a book during the summer of 1994.

With the completion of this project, it is the Society's hope that this record of Waterdown's main thoroughfare, Dundas Street, will be enjoyed by young and old, residents and visitors, and that the stories long associated with it will never be forgotten.

CROKER

Dundas Street

York, October 1793: "Captain Smith is returned from cutting the road named Dundas. It is opened for 20 miles. They met with quantities of wild grapes, and put some of the juice to ferment to make vinegar, and Captain Smith said we it turned out very tolerable wine."

In these few lines from her highly informative and often witty diary, Mrs. John Graves Simcoe, wife of Upper Canada's first Lieutenant Governor, records the beginnings of this historic old Ontario road.

Although John Graves Simcoe is credited with the original idea of constructing this early highway, the first proposal actually came from his father. Prior to his appointment by the British government, Simcoe had served in the American Revolutionary War and while there his father had collected old French maps. Among these which he obtained was one showed a fur trading route from the vicinity of present-day Dundas to the upper waters of the Thames River.

On his arrival in Upper Canada in 1792, Simcoe's primary task was to initiate and supervise settlement. He was also given the responsibility of formulating plans to deal with the overwhelming fear of invasion from the recently liberated American colonies. His father presented him with the suggestion that a waterway dog along the fur trader's route would provide an inland passage, well back from the border and relatively safe from a surprise attack.

After studying the suggestion, and with the expectation of imminent border attacks, John Graves Simcoe and a military party travelled through the western part of the province, from Niagara to the border at Windsor during the winter of 1793. Guided by Indians, and following their trails by foot and sleigh where possible, Simcoe came to the conclusion that a road would be superior, it was felt would be multi-purpose, serving as a military link between Lakes Ontario, Erie, St. Clair and Huron, and as a spur to settlement. Simcoe also reasoned that the American control of shipping on the Great Lakes was certain for several years, and therefore an inland route was the only way to ensure the safe movement of troops and supplies.

The decision to relocate the capital of the province from Newark, to a site on the Thames River, where London stands today initiated the start of the highway. Simcoe believed that this new inland capital was a safer location and could be linked to Lake Ontario by the highway he planned the road running from the Thames to Burlington Bay. From here there would be a link with the network of trails going eastwards to York and onto Kingston, and with a north-south route joining York with Lake Simcoe.

With his surveyor, Augustus Jones, and accompanied by a guide, Jean Baptiste Rousseau, Lt. Governor John Graves Simcoe selected the exact spot where the work would begin. They entered Burlington Bay from the lake, and proceeded through the marsh at the eastern end, choosing a site that was a known Indian landing place. Jones began his survey immediately, using a line marked at an angle of 70 degrees west that ran from Coote's Paradise to the upper forks of the Thames River, a distance of eighty miles.

Work on this first or western section of the route that today is often referred to as "The Governor's Road" went as far as the Mohawk Village on the Grand River where Joseph Brant was chief. The actual road cutting under the direction of a Captain Smith and a company of men of the Queen's Rangers was completed in less that a month. But opening a road in 1793 involved nothing more than clearing a corridor through the brush, leaving the bigger stumps to rot and often going around very large groups of trees.

York: September 23, 1793: Captain Smith has gone to open a road to be called Dundas Street, from the head of the Lake to River La Tranche. He has 100 men with him. I hear that they kill

rattlesnakes everyday, yet not a man has been bitten. Captain Smith sent two of the snakes in a barrel that I might see them, they were dark and ugly and make a whizzing sound in shaking their rattles when I touched them with a stick."

The second section of the highway began in the spring of 1794 went as far as the site of the planned new capital, London. However the departure of Lt. Governor Simcoe from Canada before the road had actually reached the site and his decision to designate York (Toronto) the official capital, caused work to almost cease completely. Within months, this primitive single- lane pathway began to grow over again and revert to forest, only Simcoe's foresight saved the road from oblivion.

Immediately work on the trail from Dundas had begun, Governor Simcoe authorized that grants of land along its route be made to the military personnel who had opened it. Although many of these grants were not taken up as farms, enough traffic was generated to make it worthwhile for the new owners to accept the responsibility of keeping their portion of the road open. Acceptance of such a land grant required that the pioneer keep his frontage clear. For the new settler, the road was his lifeline of transport, and to Governor Simcoe, it ensured the viability of his road. Even though remained as little more than a primitive path with mud holes that, as one early traveler wrote, stretched from one spot to the next, it ensured that the settlement of Upper Canada would come.

Stretching from Burlington Bay to York, the second and eastward section of the highway that bore the name Dundas Highway after Henry Dundas, who was Home Secretary and responsible for Colonial Affairs, was not begun until a decade later.

Since water transportation along the north shore of Lake Ontario was good, there was not the urgency to build the eastern section of the road that Simcoe considered to be so important. In 1805, the great block of land that lay beyond the eastern boundary of East Flamborough Township was finally purchased from the Mississauga Indians. This vast hunting ground was the entire area between Burlington Bay and the Humber River. Simcoe honoured the Mississauga's land rights, and although settlers had to cross the Indian's territory more and more frequently as the old capital of Newark was transferred to York, the Lt. Governor refused to force the Mississaugas to give up their land. Finally in 1806 an agreement was reached and the government took possession of the land, the Indians gradually dispersing to the Grand River and Montreal area.

In the same year Nelson Township was opened to settlers. Onto the newly surveyed land, families with names such as Bastedo, Hopkins, Winkle, Calvert, Zimmerman, Bennett, Rose, King and Chisholm soon settled. Several of these people were already on the land as it had requested the location prior to the official opening. With the arrival of the settlers, the opening of the road to the east and the capital of York began.

The road was surveyed and constructed several miles back from the lakeshore to avoid the difficulty of bridging the wide mouths of the many creeks and streams that crossed the area, and for greater safety in transporting troops and supplies in time of war. Much of the construction work on this eastern section of Dundas Street was under the direction of an American road builder called Asa Danforth at a cost of $90 a mile.

Since this construction work involved nothing more than clearing a corridor through the bush, leaving the bigger stumps to rot and little else, the complaint by Danforth later that he lost money on the contract seems difficult to believe!

After serving several generations of settlers, and changing from a footpath to a single-lane track that could accommodate wagons and carts to the present day thoroughfare through Etobicoke and Mississauga, this highway has been the scene of tremendous change during its two hundred years. Hundreds of stories and incidents are associated with it, but so many of them are now forgotten by the passage of time.

The historic village of Waterdown, the Dundas Street passes through on its way westwards towards London, is full of such stories and incidents. Built upon land that was originally granted to Lt. Alexander McDonnell in 1796, the area remained undeveloped until 1806 when the second phase of the Dundas Street construction commenced.

Alexander Brown, an agent of the North West Company, purchased property from McDonnell in 1806, and within a year built a sawmill at the falls on Grindstone Creek. The enterprises of Brown, and later Thomas Griffin during the 1820s and 1830s accounted for substantial industrial growth in the creek valley.

The first Common School was built in 1824 on the south-west corner of Plumbago and Dundas Street. Mill Street South and Franklin Street were the only north-south roads opened to the south of Dundas Street by the 1830s, providing access to milling sites just above the Great Falls and along the Grindstone Creek. On the east bank of the Grindstone, only Board Street ran north off Dundas along the river bank, and Spring Street ran south.

In 1831 Thomas Griffin prepared a village plan for Waterdown and during the next decade sold a number of village lots, primarily west of Mill Street along Dundas Street. With his brother and business partner, Absalom, he continued to add to his industrial holdings with the construction of another sawmill and a carding mill. Soon other pioneer settlers were attracted to the potential power of the Grindstone and purchased lots, several of them with water privileges. Names such as Hindle, Upham, and Cummins accelerated the industrial development of the creek. This area, later to become known as Smokey Hollow was fuelled by dams and raceways, and was the site of saw, grist and flour mills, a woollen mill, brass foundry, tanneries, pails, mash, smelle and basket factories.

By the date of the first Village Assessment in 1841, the village population totalled 165 people, many of them engaged in milling and the commercial establishments that had begun to develop along the narrow Dundas Highway which was the only access to the interior of the area and the principal east-west route between Toronto and Dundas.

In 1878, Waterdown was incorporated as a village. The last years of the nineteenth century were years of general population decline. A series of fires, floods and dwindling water power in the Grindstone Creek heralded the end of Waterdown's milling industries. Early in the twentieth century, several major fires destroyed many of the older commercial structures along Dundas Street, dramatically changing the face of the Village of Waterdown.

Vinegar Hill Section

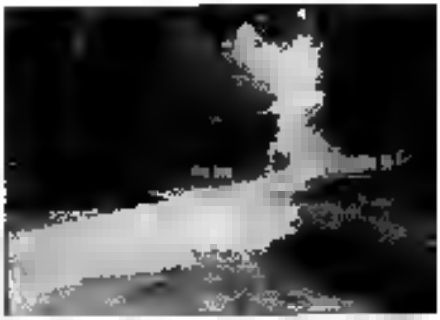
Vinegar Hill

The eastern entrance to Watertown descends gently through tree-lined Vinegar Hill, the oldest section of this historic village.

The name appears to have been in use from earliest times and may have been given because of the many modest gardens with apple orchards that lined the hill. Much of this apple crop was required for the production of cider which was made from late summer harvests using the windfalls and bruised fruit. With no modern refrigeration available for the storage of the cider it had a very short life before fermentation began to change the cider to vinegar. By the early Fall, the smell of rotting apples was almost inevitably noticeable to residents and visitors as they entered the village, and may explain the origin of the name.

Settlement along Danube Street had begun by the time Pioneer Culver Griffin prepared a village plan for Watertown in 1832. By 1834 there were approximately 48 households listed on the Assessment Rolls for Watertown. Most of these houses were located on the east bank of the Grindstone Creek in the Vinegar Hill area and consisted of one storey log or frame cottages facing onto Danube Street.

Between 1832 and 1840 a small burying ground for the village was opened on Vinegar Hill. Through donations of land from George Bush to the diocese, David Culp and Trustees of the Watertown Chapel of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Abraham Griffin to the Trustees of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the Union Cemetery was established. Within the grounds of this peaceful cemetery, rolling hills of stones to pioneer settlers with names such as Bates, Griffin, Sawdon, Culp and Brown are to be found recording the hardships of the early years.



looking down Vinegar Hill 1907

Vinegar Hill from Mill Street

1914

Kirby House

Originally part of a two hundred acre Crown Grant to Ebenezer Culver Collins in 1837, this house on the north side of Vinegar Hill is one of the oldest in the village. Between 1838 and 1855, ownership of the property is unclear. This is probably the time period during which the rear section, which is the oldest part of the house was constructed. Land registry documents and entries on the Assessment Rolls suggest William Long or George Bush as the first owners. George Will and his wife Hannah, a member of the Kinsley family were owners from 1855 to 1863.

The rear section of the dwelling built of course as rubble stone dates from the 1839-1855 period, while the front one-and-a-half storey board and batten section dates from a later period, c 1860-1870. One of the most interesting features of the house, clearly visible from Dundas Street is the wooden verandah with curved brackets on the pillars of the board and batten section.

Like many houses on this side of Vinegar Hill, the rear property was used for market gardening during the first half of this century. There were large greenhouses in the backyard of this house until the late 1960s, possibly remnants from the time when James H. Sullivan, a Waterdown Market Gardener, owned the property.

Raycroft Cottage

Raycroft Cottage 48 Church Street Summer 1979

This charming single story cottage on Vinegar Hill dates from the 1860-1870 period, and is one of several similar cottages to be found in the village. Built close to the street, its simple design is in sharp contrast to the larger red stone corner houses to the west. Constructed of clapboard, overlaid with white board and batten, and with a low hip roof, the dwelling sits on a stone foundation with 8 inch brick walls.

Several well known Watertown names appear in the Registry Book as owners of the property: Featherston (1880-1920) Vance (1930s), Strutt (1940s) and Hamilton (1950s)

Reverend George Richardson, a Methodist minister serving Watertown and the surrounding area is among the earliest documented owners of the house. Reportedly, Mrs. Richardson's sister lived with them during the time they were stationed in Watertown and the two ladies were renowned as avid horse racing fans.

1973

Pillé House

In 1977 Mr. "Hillbilly" Burke, a Longtime village resident recalled that this home was originally a one storey log cottage. Unfortunately the building has been altered several times, even the rubble lower storey and board and batten upper level have been covered since the William Reid photograph recorded its appearance c.1910.

The house was formerly situated from Dundas Street but, possibly to ease traffic flow along Vinegar Hill, it is now accessed off William Street.

The Pillé House - 65 Dundas Street

Eager House

One of the fine Victorian residences in the village, this house was built for the Eager family c 18[illegible] and remained in with ownership for three generations virtually unaltered.

The patriarch of the family, Benjamin Eager, emigrated from [illegible]land in 1837 settling in Lowville with his son Joseph. A mason Joseph, with his family, came to Wyoming and was the builder of this home. In 1873 with his two sons James and Joseph Jr., he purchased Griffin's General Store at the south-east corner of Mill and Dundas Street. They continued to operate it until 1924 with a variety of merchandise which included groceries, dry goods, boots, shoes, menthol and wallpaper.

Eager House 340 Mills Rd. Summer 97

The house is constructed of [illegible] stone with a rough cast and lime compost facing that was added around the turn of the century. Over the years, the facing has been painted a variety of colours. The most noticeable features of the house are the unusual pattern with brick quoins of a sun motif finished by Ison, and the beautifully carved bargeboard of the gables.

1997

Board Street and the Dundas Street Bridge

Located at the foot of Vinegar Hill, Board Street descended steeply to the Grindstone Creek, the Vance House, and by travelling along the banks of the creek, to Will Reid's farm.

This area, between Reid's Dam just upstream, and the bridge was the site of several small mills between 1835 and 1911 although today no evidence remains. A tanning mill that belonged to the Reid family was virtually destroyed by the demands of the railway as it moved into the Grindstone Creek valley, and is ended its life as a huge barn. Finally remembered as a favourite playground for the children of the Vinegar Hill area, the old wooden mill-turned-barn housed a wonderful collection of fancy pigeons, the property of Will Reid, the renowned Waterdown pigeon-fancier of the early twentieth century who captured so much of the village's history with his camera.

Four miles the valley: The Waterdown Knitting and Axe Factory, and Slater's Low Mill line the edge of the creek - 1905.

Below the railway came to Waterdown, the Reid and Slater Mills had faced each other across the Grindstone Creek. It appears from conversations of some villagers that the two owners were not always on good terms. It is recalled that Henry Slater often shouted across the creek at John Reid, Will's father "Hey mill will be turning out lumber when yours is housing pigeons!"

The Waterdown South Railway Station

The coming of the railway to the village of Waterdown resulted in the relocation of the Grindstone Creek to the east side of the valley. Much of the project was done with hand labour throughout the summer and winter of 1910 and 1911. The physical changes complete, the tracks were laid on oak ties and first sand, gravel which was quarried in the C.P.R.'s own pit in Waterdown. The canal line from Hamilton to Guelph Junction, a stretch of 19 miles took two years to complete at a cost of a million dollars. The construction workers lived in camp which were located in Smokey Hollow, and the surveyor and engineers boarded at the old Post Office on Main Street South.

Prior to the official opening of the C.P.R. Guelph junction line on July 1 1912, John and Ada Vincent's huge two storey house was converted to become the village railway station. The building and served as the Station Master's home and operated until 1962 when the station closed and the last Station Master, George McKay left.

During the early years of the railway, the station, known officially as the South Waterdown Station was a hive of activity. Students from as far away as Campbellville took the train daily to Waterdown High School. The local farmers used the line to take their produce to the Hamilton Market every morning, and freight for the village and surrounding area was delivered for pick-up.

Gradually as more and more people began to purchase cars, the passenger service was no longer needed, and in 1950 the C.P.R. discontinued the service, and since then, the line has only been used for freight.

Railway construction in front of the Vincent house (1)

The Dundas Street Bridge the Waterdown South Station, formerly the Vincent House c.1910

Dundas Street Bridge

With the arrival of the railway in 1911 the Dundas Street Bridge crossing over Etobicoke Creek was raised by Ford Carson & Sons. Since that first major structural change to the bridge, several more have been required as heavier demands have been placed upon it.

During 1965-1966, while the Gaffney Construction Company was working on the bridge, they used the upstairs rooms of the old Weston South Railway Station as a storage shed, and the downstairs as an office for their staff. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company arranged with Gaffney to dismantle the station once they had finished their work. When the time came, Gaffney decided that the safest way to get rid of the old building would be to burn it.

Etobicoke Reeve, Orly Gurby and Fire Commissioner, Ted Appleby unwise to give permission on the grounds that the village had a By-Law which prohibited the setting of fires in June, July and August. But on the night of June 21, 1966, vandals did the job for them!

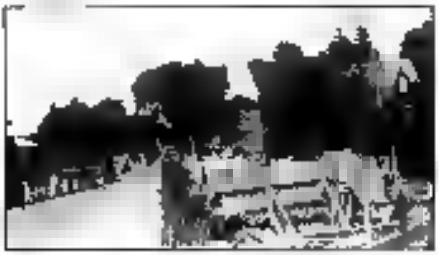
Over 200 people stood on the new Dundas Street Bridge and watched the station go up in smoke. This closed the history on the Weston South Railway Station, and was the last major fire along Dundas Street.

Dundas Street Bridge 1911

Dundas Street Bridge and Eaton's house 1911

Road work on Dundas Street Bridge 1922-1926

Looking east up Dundas Street Hill to the eastern entrance of Hulmetown at Elgin Street c. 1916.



Road work on Dundas Street Bridge by Gaffney Construction Company, 1965

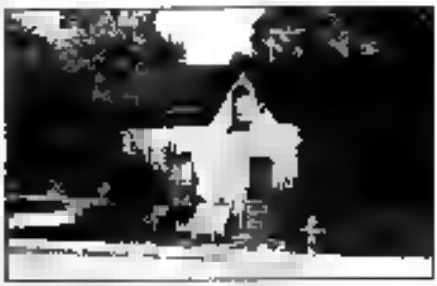
49

1993

The Mitchell Peer House

Peer and [illegible] an outside [illegible] [illegible] (Cornell [illegible] [illegible] Interesting [illegible] [illegible] Village.

The front and [illegible] left [illegible] the property enclosed by a decorative fence, originally extended southwards towards the north-east corner block of Mill and Dundas Street.



The Peer house [illegible] and Peer sold it [illegible] Bowers for the same. The home was burnt to the ground [illegible] mysteriously in the 1940's. Later, Mr. Ralph Masseron redeveloped the area with [illegible] small collection of specialty shops.

Raphael's Cottage

Nestled between the north-east corner block of Mill and Dundas Streets and the Post Office, a small one storey frame building housed a variety of village businesses. During the 1940's, Mr. Elmer King and his son-in-law, Ted Sherwin, operated King's Barber Shop from the building. In the 1950's the name changed to Sherwin's Grocery and Mini Store, and till 1957 the Waterdown Library moved into the space from the Memorial Hall. The Library remained until 1970 when it moved again to the Haynes Building on Mill Street South.

Mr. Ralph Newman, the last owner had a paint and wallpaper finishes in the rear section, and his wife operated a baby dress shop at the front. During the 1960's, Mr. Newman demolished the building, and on purchasing the neighbouring Post property and house, replaced front with a two storey commercial/ residential block containing a group of specialty shops.

Raphael's Cottage, Dundas Street 1988

The Eager Weeks Block to Dundas Street Bridge

Between the east section of the Eager-Weeks Block and the Dundas Street Bridge, a small group of buildings owned by the Eager family existed until c 1980. Now almost forgotten, they were a part of Dundas Street's ever changing streetscape that has disappeared with the continuing demands for parking and commercial development.

Dundas Street, 1977. Covered with modern siding, the house was first rented to the Lewis and Bowers families before demolition in 1981.

Eager's house, 1975. Vacant and in poor condition with the exception of the front section, it was moved to the Mitchell House across the road.

Looking west to 347 Dundas Street from Dundas Street Bridge c. 1975. Small cottage and large garage where Eager's cars were stored.

Commercial Section

The Eager Weeks Block

South-East Corner of Mill and Dundas Streets

The magnificent stone building on the south-east corner of Mill and Dundas Streets is instantly recognizable to thousands of people in Hamilton and the surrounding area as once being the home of Weeks of Waterdown.

The corner building actually consists of four separate sections, although in all probability the entire block was developed at the same time c. 1824-1830. Fires, structural changes and additions over the years have wrought great changes and allowed each individual section to have its own architectural style. A prime location at the crossroads of town and travel in the village has ensured stable ownership, as the building has changed hands infrequently during the past 170 years.

The oldest, and probably the only original section is the impressive corner one and-a-half storey side gable unit atop a parapet wall, constructed of rubble stone, parged and striped to resemble dressed stone. Local tradition suggests that this building was constructed soon after Ebenezer Culver Griffin's purchase in 1821, possibly as early as 1824, and that the family operated a General Store in the building until it was sold to the Eager family in 1873. In fact, E.C. Griffin sold the property to Daniel Cumming in 1830, and like his later ownership of the neighbouring American Hotel, was probably relinquished because of his involvement with the rapidly developing milling industry in the Chedoke Valley.

The second section was erected c.1860 after the original frame building burned and was rebuilt several times. The third section was over the site of a detached barn that was used for the delivery horse until the 1940s. Demolished for the Weeks family c.1948, the building was replaced almost immediately due to the demands for an expansion of their hardware department within the General Store.

The first or fourth portion of the block was acquired by William Featherstone in 1860 who operated a bakery on the premises. The previous owner of this section, James Rodgers, also a baker, suffered a disastrous fire in 1853 that not only destroyed much of his bakery but also threatened the rest of the Eager Block. In the early 1900s, the rear extension was added to the building by the Featherstone family. Many older residents of the village recall the south wall of the apartment collapsing when the horse barn in the third section was being removed, thus exposing to view the inside of the

Eager's General Store 1904

Rutherston's house. The Weeks family promptly purchased this final section of the building thus rounding the whole block to one ownership.

From the 1840s, this corner of Waterdown was a popular stopping place for teamsters from as far as Guelph, who would drive their wagons down to Brown's Wharf (Aldershot) with their grain and produce and after selling it, return home through the village. For some it was an annual trip during which they would purchase their supplies for the year, for others, they would spend the night in one of Waterdown's seven hotels, including one that was reputedly section above the store.

In 1873 the store was bought by the Eager brothers who moved their business to Waterdown from their previous general store in Nelson Township. Both James Edward and his brother Joseph shared the responsibility for running the Eager Brother's General Store for over 40 years. Although in competition with the general stores on Main Street operated by FW Crocker and G.S. Griffin, Eager's reputation for its warmth and hospitality and the wonderful variety of merchandise made it very popular.

Joseph Pharmacy & Toyota Building, August 1967

A section from and Weeks of Waterdown, 1967

George Weeks purchased the Eager Store in December 1924, and so began the long tradition associated with "Weeks of Waterdown" that saw it grow from a small general store to a unique hardware establishment that was based upon good service and personal attention.

When the family arrived to take up residence the hitching posts for horses and front verandah were still in place. However, one night after returning to the store from the Township Hall where he had gone to deliver coins, Grant Weeks, George's son, found a load mess at the front of the store. Looking through the window he noticed the southern section of the verandah roof had caved in from heavy snow sliding off the roof above. Afraid that someone might have been passing when it collapsed, Ernie and others spent an anxious time shovelling the snow off the sidewalk before finding that no one had been trapped.

During the same store renovation, "Weeks" was once a cheese factory. George Weeks discovered that the temperature in the store basement of the corner block was fairly constant and remained at the correct level to age cheese. When ready for sale, a length of piano wire

was drawn through the 80 pound slabs to cut the cheese into saleable pieces. These were then waxed to preserve their freshness and high quality. Described as "good old cheese" its reputation brought customers from far and wide to Watertown.

After George Weeks died, Bruce opened the store, slowly allowing the business to progress from a general store to a hardware store that gained an area-wide reputation for the stock that it carried and find coining the phrase: "You'll be sure to find it at Weeks of Watertown.

Weeks of Watertown 1900.

1912

North American Hotel / American Hotel / American House

As soon as the last sod was cut through Upper Canada's wilderness, hotels, taverns and inns appeared like magic along the way, and the innkeeper, that "Jack-of-all-Trades" in the pioneer community, opened his establishment for business.

With the opening of the Governor's Road through the Iroquois settlement of Waterdown, entrepreneur Ebenezer C. Griffin saw great potential in the area with the proximity of waterpower on the Grindstone Creek and the location of this road. The southwest corner, the present day site of the American Hotel, was part of the first piece of property that he purchased from Crown Pioneer, Alexander Brown in 1821. Construction probably took place almost immediately, as both his General Store on the opposite corner and the Hotel are believed to have been in operation by 1824-1826.

By 1829 Ebenezer Bailey of Saltfleet had begun a stage-coach line between Ancaster that York that left Ancaster at 4 am each Monday, Wednesday and Friday, arriving at York an exhausting eleven hours later. In 1833 William Waller's Stage Line was carrying passengers westwards from York. So within a decade of the Inn's opening, there was a steady passenger trade in place.

Possibly because of his involvement in the Temperance Movement, or the developing milling industry that he was prosecuting, Griffin only owned the hotel for a short period, the property being sold to Alexander Meikle, an innkeeper in 1832.

Stage coach, front steps of North American Hotel 1900-1905.

The King to Queen Stage and American Hotel Stafford and Ide of Building 1905.

Throughout its long history, the hotel has been known by a variety of names, including, North American Hotel and American House. It has also been owned and operated by many different innkeepers. In Smith's 1846 Gazetteer the Village of Waterdown is recorded as possessing two hotels, one of which was almost certainly the American Hotel, with Mr. Samuel Anderson as proprietor. Possibly because of its prestigious location, this building has withstood a permanent humanity, serving the travellers on both the east-west and north-south routes through the area and hence making it one of the oldest hotels in Ontario.

Among the known owners and innkeepers were Samuel Anderson (1837-1849), John and Thomas Stuart (1875) who had come to Canada from Scotland in 1871, Michael Boyle (1880s), James H. Cooper (1884-1885) and Samuel Cook (1885-1906). For a brief period following Mr. Cook's death, the hotel was owned by Richard Morley, but in 1911, his widow, Mary Cook, returned to

operate it until 1926. During prohibition the hotel was closed, reopening in 1935 with proprietors William Cousins and E Stanley.

Many grand social events have been held in the building over the years. At one time, an archway in the Mill Street wall was the entrance to a passageway through which carriages could drive. This allowed the ladies to alight inside the hotel - a great convenience, especially if they were dressed for an evening in the upstairs ballroom. The archway was later closed in to make an apartment, but for many years after, the outline was still visible through the galleryork.

Early car passing the American Hotel 19 0.

Before the turn of the century, the hotel was the site of a winter banquet hosted by Agricultural Implements Agent John Prentiss for his customers. This sentimental social occasion alternated annually between the Arnaldum and Elk Hotels and followed the arrival of the latest implements at the Wyandotte Grand Trunk Railway Station, and a spectacular procession up the Wyandotte Road.

During the last thirty years, the interior of the hotel has been drastically altered, both to modernize and serve the demands of the public. In 1966 the wall between the segregated male and female front rooms was eliminated, and during the 1980s, the original wooden floors, tin ceiling in the front section, and the last old-time stand-up bar in Ontario were removed. But despite these changes, the American Hotel/Arnaldum is be one of the landmarks in the commercial life of the village.

1993

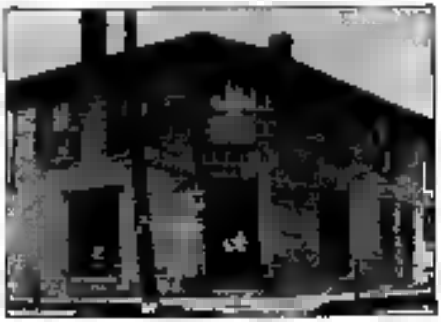
Mill and Dundas Street Intersection

Unlike Main and Dundas, the Mill and Dundas Street intersection has not experienced great change. The building on the north-west corner, popularly known as the J.T. Sock Building, dates from the 1850s and has housed many businesses during its history.

The Waterdown Mechanic's Institute and its reading room of the building from the time of construction, and had their library there. Although the Institute grew in its early years, membership declined as television became available, and the last meeting was held on May 9, 1956.

The first telephone line in Waterdown was installed in John Steel's store in May 1881, and for the next twenty-three years, this was the only telephone in the village. In 1900 George Reid rented the store for his harness repair business. He worked during the night instead of the day - possibly because farmers would bring in broken equipment after a day's work and expect it to be fixed by the next day.

The Traders Bank occupied the downstairs part of the building from 1909, and in 1911, installed a vault on the premises, subject to the condition that it "was to be removed if and when they vacated". The Royal Bank bought the whole building in 1921 and remained at this location until the new bank was built on Dundas and Main in 1963.



G.M. Reid Harness Shop [illegible] brick Building north-west corner Mill [illegible] Dundas Street 1900.

[illegible]

1997

Dundas Street

Looking west from the Mill Street North intersection

North side showing Mosport Barber Shop / Bullard's Bakery and the Bell House and Tower c.1880-1900.

North side showing Royal Standard Inn on the north-east corner of Mill and Dundas Streets c. 1910.

North side showing The Mill Mosport Shop which replaced Manley Brothers Grocerie and Antique Shop c. 1980.

Huxley Brothers Shop Dundas Street

The western section of the J.T Stock Building has housed commercial businesses for over one hundred and twenty years, probably due to the building's prime situation at such a well-travelled Watertown intersection. Comprised of stone over squared rubble, the L-shaped Huxley building was designed to house a private residence above and a hundred at street level typical of merchant store design in the 1850s.

In 1941, the Huxley brothers, Dan and Tom, followed T.E. Carey Groceries and Meats into the building. Between 1941 and 1980, the brothers developed a reputation of kindness towards those who were facing difficulties. They delivered produce to customers who were sick, allowed those who were experiencing financial difficulties to pay later, and almost salvaged when regular customers did not come into the shop.

Daniel and [illegible] 1947

Mr Daniel Huxley [illegible]

1999

Next to the J.T. Scott Block on the north side of Dundas Street, Philip Menger's barber shop also housed the Waterdown Library c. 900-1905. Peter Petty, the High School Principal acted as librarian and set up a reading room in the front of the building where a little wood stove was installed for the winter months.

Above: [illegible] to the window [illegible] to right: [illegible] Walter McGregor, Robert Jones, Thomas A. Armand Smith, John Colper and John Doyle.

The Antiques Plus Shop Dundas Street

Dramatically changed from the date of photographs taken between 1890-1914, the building has housed numerous Waterdown businesses during the past hundred and thirty years.

High in the gable of Edwards Bakery that existed at the turn of the century, the name of the Bendicos Hotel can be seen beneath the layers of siding paint. This dates the building's existance from c.1865-1867. Alexander Somerville writing in the Daily Spectator on September 16, 1867 following a visit, described Waterdown as "lay winking in the noontide sun one of the sleepy towns fearing the ancient British midst of Bendicos."

Although numerous renovations have occurred throughout the years, the original foundation used during the construction can be seen at the rear, and the large timbers once used in the early 1900s remain in the back portion of the building.

Meat Market in the lower section, ownership unknown 1890

Jewell Store 1900-1909

Bethel Bakery 1903-1914

Dundas Street

Looking East towards Yonge Hill

During the early years of the twentieth century, Dundas Street was still a dirt road, but well groomed to accommodate both wagons and automobiles. Sidewalks were made of wooden boards, and several businesses had covered walkways to afford customers protection from the elements. The road was paved in the 1920s, when further work was done on the Dundas Street Bridge and concrete sidewalks were installed in the commercial section of the village.

Looking [illegible] 1915

The Bell House and Tower Section Dundas Street

During the early years of this century, a group of frame buildings that included The Bell House and Tower together with several other businesses were to be found in the church section of the north side. All were removed to allow for the construction of the present day Memorial Hall erected to honour the veterans of World War I.

The Bell House and Tower were erected in 1874. The first village election in 1878 and the first Council meeting are recorded as being held in this building. The Third Divisional Court for the County of Wentworth and the Village Lock-up were located in the building as was the Fire Department's sole hand *pumper*.

Capping the tall wooden tower was the village bell, tolled at the start and finish of each work day, as well as to alert residents of community emergencies. After the building was demolished, the bell, so much a part of village life, was retained and eventually mounted at the front of the Memorial Hall.

In 1908, the Waterdown Women's Institute purchased the site, and with church group, undertook the raising of funds to build a community hall. Construction began in the Spring of 1910, and miraculously the partly-built structure was not damaged by the Great Waterdown Fire of that year. Some of the workers actually saw the fire that started in the Barrel Factory on Franklin Street jump to the Roller Rink, raised the alarm and then rushed to see what they could pull from the building.

The construction was completed in the late Fall, and the Waterdown Review recently described the hall as "an example of what a small community can achieve when united in a common goal."

The building was officially opened on January 24 1923, although it had been dedicated the previous Sunday afternoon, when a huge number of people gathered for the special service and unveiling of a tablet to honour the soldiers who had enlisted from the village and given their lives in the Great War of 1914-1918.

View of Customs' Duty Store and the Bell House and Tower circa 1910.

Lower section of the Bell House and Tower with office in the Watertown Arsenal, 9 B.

"Chestnut Grove" Dundas Street

On November 2, 1987 the Town of Flamborough passed By-Law 87-150-H designating this building and grounds at 215 Dundas Street as a property of architectural and historical interest under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Known as "Chestnut Grove" the building houses a number of community organizations serving the Town of Flamborough and is open to the general public.

Built in 1880 by prosperous local lumber merchant, Charles Smiley, then Reeve of Waterdown, the house was built around an earlier one. The addition was constructed to face Dundas Street, while the earlier house had faced Main Street. Great care was taken by Mr. Smiley's builder to match the brick work and window openings of the original house, so that today only an expert can detect the existence of an earlier building.

Today the building is entered through a handsome oak door with etched and frosted glass. Many fine interior features remain, including a wide Victorian staircase, with a decorative carved newel post, handsome plaster ceilings and a magnificent marble fireplace with metal screen. One special feature of the house is the small enclosed second-story porch above the front door. A round-headed door from the second floor hallway leads onto the originally decorated porch, allowing a fine view over the village of Waterdown.

Charles Smiley gave the name "Chestnut Grove" to his property, possibly from the large number of Horse-Chestnut trees that were growing on the land behind his house. Even today odd specimens of these trees can be seen in the neighbourhood. Miraculously this house suffered no damage from the fire that devastated the commercial establishments just to the west of it between 1908 and 1922.

Charles Smiley House 1880

1992

Vacant Property after Demolition of the George Potts House

Southeast Corner of Franklin Street

Vacant lot, circa 1978.

The commercial section on Franklin Street was demolished and replaced by the present day Harper Building between 1977 and 1980. To many village residents, the loss of the George Potts house marked the end of a chapter in Watertown's history.

In 1913 George Potts moved his blacksmith business from Clapp Bros's Corners to the corner of Franklin and Dundas Streets. For over 50 years he provided his blacksmithing skills, shoeing horses, sharpening saws, repairing farm machinery and iron work. Life was not all work for Mr. Potts, as during his lifetime he made over 100 violins, and on many summer evenings, he could be seen sitting by the pump beside his house amusing himself and others while playing on one of his masterpieces.

Following his death on March 9 1967 his funeral was reported throughout Canada, partly because he was one of the last blacksmiths in Canada and partly himself his cortege was accompanied by a mounted escort of over 20 of his customers, a fitting tribute to a fine craftsman.

1999

East of Franklin Street

Many businesses have operated along this north side of the street. Among those remembered are: Ellis Goodson's Tailor Shop, Wills Funk, Mid-Town Laundry, a Pool Room Office and a Restaurant.

Hallowe'en Jaycees ... Post House ... Annual Pictorial Day Parade, 95th.

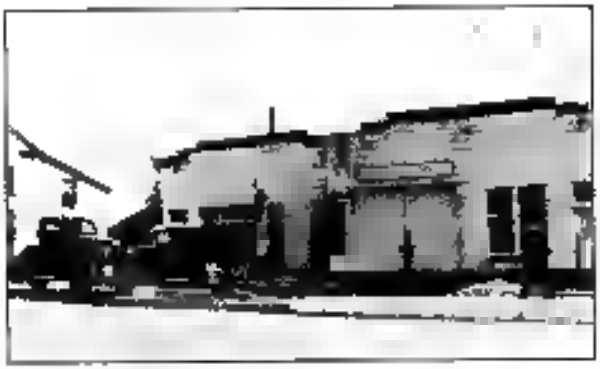
Looking east from Franklin Street 96.5

The ... of Barksdale Shop.

99

Messecar Bros. Garage, Dundas Street

In June 1938, Emery Messecar and his brother Howard purchased the L. & H. Garage that was located on the west corner of Franklin and Dundas Street from Harry Lillycrop and Bob Hagey. Advertising their business as "Another Progressive Waterdown Firm" the garage operated on this site for almost twenty years.



Messecar Bros. Garage, Dundas Street c.1938.

Although Howard Messecar returned to his work as an Accountant in 1940, the garage remained as Messecar Brothers for many years, as another brother who had been working in the gold mines at Schumacher retired and came to right Waterdown for the business.

Until late in 1946 the garage Although open 24 hours a day and was reputably the only garage on Highway #5 with a paving area between St. George and Islington. Between 1938 and 1946, the garage would tow a car from the Waterdown area to Toronto for $5.00, even at night. During the 1950s mentioned provided full service to the rapidly developing motor route, a line of pumps, the service of licensed mechanics that included Doug Lillycrop, Chester Lillycrop, Emil Imm and "Shirley" Shelton, a towing service and membership in the C.M.C. and C.A.A.

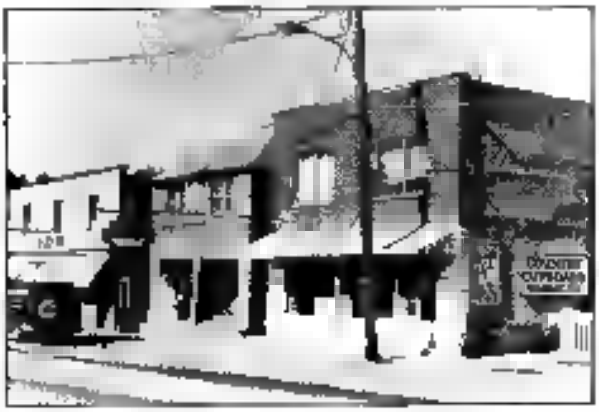
On April 1, 1956 the garage moved to a new building further west on Dundas Street and continued under the Messecar name until Emery Messecar's death in 1969.

North West Main to Mill Street

The commercial section between the north-east corner and Chestnut Grove has been destroyed three times this century by the devastating fires of 1906, 1915, and 1922. In each following burn fire, the block has been home to a wide variety of small businesses. Some, such as Baker's, Ahern's and Langford's have remained following the fires, but others are only fleetingly remembered pen names in the village business listings.

Stories from the 1922 Fire abound, but those concerning the occupants of this block are especially touching since most misfortunes occurred solely from the inadequacies of the village fire department.

The Bell Telephone in Alf Dale's Store was operated by the Burns sisters. They remained at the switchboard for much of the afternoon while fire raged around the building. Finally Miss Hazel Burns, the chief operator, fearing the building would catch fire at any moment, sent the younger Burns out, but heroically remained at her post until Hamilton firemen arrived to remove the switchboard as the building began to smoulder. Shortly after the ladies left, the roof caved in completely, gutted.



The Anthony Restaurant - Country Cupboard Block 309-313 Dundas Street 1980

Mr. Alf Dale, owner of the store was advised soon after the blaze began to remove the brand new car from the front of Springer's Garage. Busy fighting the fire in the Roller Rink, he said that he did not think the fire would reach the garage since the village fire brigade was on the scene. Before he realized it, the fire spread across to Main Street South where the automobile was parked and it was destroyed.

Village Fires

The first major fire of the twentieth century is poorly documented. Occurring in 1906, it broke out just east of the Main Street North intersection, destroying several businesses, but not the magnificent Crocker Building on the corner.

Less than a decade later, on May 25, 1915, the Crocker Building was damaged by another major fire reported in the Hamilton Herald, the fire which broke out early in the morning, levelled the corner block. Owned by Mr. Frederick Wesley Crocker, it was described by the newspaper as "the finest conflagrible fighting in the village". Included in the building were the General Store operated by Postmaster, Mr. W. Walley, and on the second floor, a large hall and public library.

So close were the flames, that the adjoining buildings were threatened. Neighbouring Allan's Barber Shop and Pool Room suffered damage when one of the walls collapsed. No one was injured, but several village fire fighters suffered cuts and bruises from the falling debris.

The volunteer village fire brigade although quickly on the scene were unable to cope with the blaze. The Hamilton Fire Department was called to assist, but arrived too late and only managed to prevent the fire from spreading. Ironically, activities in the village on Victoria Day had been to raise funds for the village library.

Three years later on September 30, 1918, villagers awakened to another Dundas Street fire. The rear section of W. Cummins' Drugstore, the site of the blaze was destroyed, but many residents who rushed to assist, succeeded in the removal of the druggist's stock.

The 1906 fire on Dundas Street destroyed a barber shop and barber shop. Crocker's General Store was untouched.

Fire damage on Dundas Street looking west, May 25, 1915.

The village fire brigade managed to bring the fire under control, but the Waterdown Review still commented upon the disaster in the next edition of the paper stating, "this fire clearly demonstrates the fact that Waterdown is still in need of additional fire fighting apparatus, such as ladders, pike poles etc. Let us hope that the days of the home fire trap are numbered, and that one Council will pass a By-Law which will prevent the building of this style of structure, which have caused our citizens a great deal of expenses in the past.

Just after 1pm on May 23, 1922, the last of the major fires to destroy sections of Dundas Street broke out. Seven businesses, the Roller Rink and three private homes were destroyed by a fire that engulfed the south side of the street between Franklin and Main Street. When it was finally extinguished by the Hamilton fire

Fortunately, the damage was estimated to be between $60,000 and $80,000.

The fire, which at its height threatened to destroy the entire village core, began in the David Davis Cooperage and Heating Mill where a spark from the engine room ignited a pile of sawdust in the rear section. None of the employees saw the flames which, fanned by wind, quickly jumped to the rear of the Roller Rink. James Hayes, employed in the construction of the new Memorial Hall across the road, saw the flames leaping up the rear of the rink and immediately raced to the village hall to ring the alarm.

Within a few minutes, the Volunteer fire brigade headed by George Cole arrived on the scene, equipped with only hand chemical engines to fight the flames which had completely enveloped the rear of the Roller Rink. They succeeded in removing the piano from the burning building but little else. As other volunteers arrived, they converged back from the nearby stores – Carroll's, Sterling Meat Company and Abon's Hardware. Among the volunteers was Mr Bechelos, who ran from his store without even removing the cash from the till. His receipts went up in smoke, along with his drugstore and stock.

It soon became very apparent that the fire was almost completely out of hand as it quickly spread from store to store. Charles Burns, local agent for the Bell Telephone company requested his switchboard operator to contact the Hamilton Fire Department for help in the hope of saving the residential section of the village. The operator was told that such a request must be made by the Reeve of Waterdown to the Mayor of Hamilton. Fortunately, another resident connected Mr. J F Vance, the County Treasurer who had an office in the Old Courthouse and he gave the necessary guarantee so the Fire

Fire damage on Dundas Street looking north-east to Christie Corner May 25, 1915

Fire damage along the north side of Dundas Street. A wing of the Grand Hotel May 25, 1915.

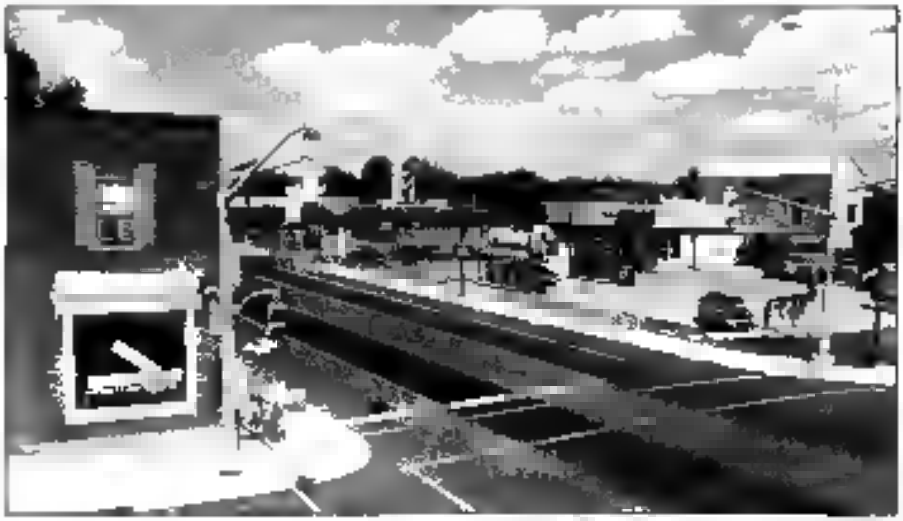
Chief who promptly dispatched an engine and gangs of the fighters.

The costly switchboard was removed from the telephone office in an effort to save it, but this severed all phone communication with the outside. When the Hamilton fire engine arrived in the village, and Deputy Chief Robert Attabison surveyed the scene, he quickly realized and there was no adequate supply of water to fight the fire. The then on a small stream on Dr. McGregor's property was broken, and then blocked in the rear of the Kirk Hotel where the fire engine was parked. This however only provided an adequate supply of water and with a slight change in wind direction, the fire was brought under control and extinguished by the early evening.

View from the roof of the Kirk Hotel, May [illegible]932.

Most of the buildings destroyed were of frame material, and these, with the oil and other inflammable materials in the garages, hardware and auto accessory businesses, made the blaze ultimately hot and the smoke very dense. At one time the violent, shooting skyward, caused sparks to land on several outbuildings to the north and west, including the home of Dr. McGregor. The Kirk Hotel roof caught fire several times, but the strong streams of water from the Hamilton engine dampened serious damage.

As the end of the day much of the village now was damaged beyond repair, and the face of Waterdown changed forever.



Dundas Street

Looking West from the Main Street Intersection

Between 1875 and 1887 the Crocker corner block was opened by William Oscar Smiley, the son of Wintertown's first Reeve, Charles Smiley. W.O. Smiley was operating a banking business on the premises and lived there the night he was involved in one of the most exciting incidents to ever occur in the Village.

During the early hours of April 14, 1887, the building was broken into by burglars searching for the location of the downstairs bank safe. They drilled two holes near the handle of the safe, inserted powder, and ignited a fuse. The enormous explosion blew open the safe, shattered windows and awakened the Smileys, who were in bed overhead. Mr. Smiley seized his revolver and blasted away from the head of the stairway hoping to scare away the intruders. The burglars returned the fire and four bullets pierced the bedroom door. Several more volleys of gunfire ensued before W.O. Smiley managed to open a side window, and call for help. Gunfire from the street struck the pair, but missed Mr. Smiley. Realizing that the disturbance would soon bring attention, the burglars began to beat a retreat, two running eastbounds, and two to the south across the Dundas Street intersection. The two who ran north carried the drawers from the safe, full of valuable papers, eventually throwing them down under the Dundas Street bridge where they were found later that morning.

99

The North East Corner of Dundas and Main Street Intersection

Looking East Towards Yonge Hill

The north-east corner of Main and Dundas Street has been "home" to many long-time family businesses that have been an important part of village history.

The Crocker family appear to have operated commercial establishments in Wyndham from an early date. In 1863 Francis Crocker appears on a list of twelve tax businesses in the village as a grocer and baker. In the listing for 1869-58, his name appears as "dealer in dry goods, hardware and groceries." It is not known if this corner was the location of the store, but Crockers appear consistently in the Directory Listings of the village from this date onwards as merchants, general store owners and druggists.

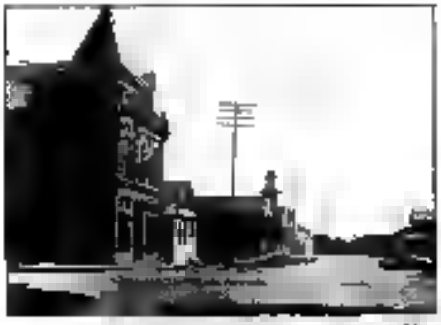
Frederick William Crocker built the very fine brick building that bore the Crocker name and graced this corner from the turn of the century. The building survived the 1906 village fire, but was badly damaged during the second in 1915.

The corner was rebuilt by Mr. Crocker, and for a short period he continued in business, serving as Postmaster until 1927. However, his interest moved into local politics and he served as Mayor of Waterdown from 1924 until his death in 1927.

The Duke family became owners of the corner block after the 1915 fire, living in the house over the store. They too operated a business, selling groceries and meats, and providing a delivery service throughout the village. Rebuilding the store after the Great Fire of 1922, they only stayed for another year before selling the corner building to W.B."Will" Langford.

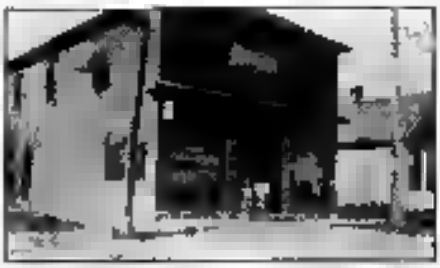
Mr. Langford had come to Waterdown after graduating from the Ontario College of Pharmacy in 1921 and set up his own chemists in one half of the Alma Grocery Store. After this building was destroyed in 1926, he moved two doors down the street into the rebuilt Duke's store.

Langford's Pharmacy continued at this location for 54 years, and like the Wade building on Mill and Dundas, could be called one of the village landmarks. Remembered for its virtually unchanged soda fountain and friendly staff, the drug store closed its doors on May 31, 1980 and moved into the new Waterdown Plaza.



c. 1920 – corner Crocker's store with one storey 1915 fire

Duke's General Store – enlarged after the 1922 fire



Hazel and Myrtle Duke outside their father's General Store – 1921

The North-East Corner of Dundas and Main Street Intersection

Alf Hale's disused Store north-east corner c.1960

Wilfrid Laughlin's Drug Store [illegible] 1962

1963

Dundas and Main Street Intersection

Looking Northwards

Croucher General Store 1915

Kirk Hotel and Croucher's General Store 1902

John Prudhom's Delivery Service outside the Kirk Hotel c.1906. Horse drawn sleighs and wagons await the arrival of mail and parcels at Mr. Croucher's General Store opposite.

1913

South East Corner of Dundas and Main Street

The majority of the buildings along this south side of Dundas Street, which were largely constructed of wood, remained virtually unchanged until the Great Fire of 1922. The south-east corner has been the site of commercial establishments throughout the history of the village. Orley B. Griffin's General Store was one of the few village businesses to retain a covered walkway into the twentieth century. However the 1922 fire destroyed both Mr. Griffin's General Store and subsequently this corner suffering complete [illegible] commercial

In January 1930, Harry Lillycrop and Bob Harvey opened a garage business on Dundas Street known as the L. & H. Garage. Originally housed in George Potts' Blacksmith shop on the east side of Franklin Street for a year, while Mr. Potts contemplated retirement to his northern cottage, the two mechanics moved into Aiken's Garage on the corner of Franklin and Dundas Street, when he decided to "unretire". During its years of operation, the L. & H. Garage complex included a set of pumps, towing and repair service and an independent driver.

[illegible] by Harry [illegible]rop and Bob Harvey, south-west corner of Dundas Street and Franklin Avenue, 1937

1937

North West Corner of Main and Dundas Street

Hotels have been an important part of Woodstown's history from its earliest days. As the village prospered, the number of hotels dramatically increased, and as declined, so did the hotels.

The Kirk Hotel stands on the north-west corner of Dundas Street and Main Street North in the village's second prominent hotel. It has been a popular "watering hole" for locals since the last decade of the nineteenth century. Unlike the establish- Hotel, it has undergone very little change since its early days, and still retains many of its original exterior features, a reflection of stable family ownership that operated the establishment for almost a century.

The property was originally granted to Alexander McDonnell, and from passed through the ownership of Alexander Brown and R.C. Griffin. In 1852, this north-west corner was purchased by Vincent Inglish, a prominent local inhabitant, a carriage manufacturer and owner of the property on which the original St. Vincent Roman Catholic Church was built. This corner was the location of his carriage works, but in 1865, the property was sold to William Haines. In the same year, Haines was recorded as a Hotel Keeper although no name for the establishment was given until 1875, when he was listed as the Proprietor of the High House Hotel.

In 1888 Patrick Kirk purchased the property, and it remained in his family's possession until 1966, passing through three generations of the Kirk family. Soon after the family assumed ownership, they converted the frame hotel to a brick building. Patrick Kirk added a kitchen and pantry at the rear and four rooms to the front of the building. This enlargement of the original hotel building being necessary to serve the increasing village traffic, as the Kirk was a stop on three different stage coach routes that passed through Woodstown.

At this time, the hotel grounds extended to just beyond the present village Post Office, but the wooden stables and large barn that fronted onto Main Street and spread on several acres of the century grounds have been demolished. Many village residents still recall the

1993

open area north of the hotel, with trees, a small rustic bridge and stream that until the 1950s ran north from the McGregor arms on Main Street and disappeared across the Kirk property before disappearing under the hotel building. Water from this stream was reputedly used to help douse the Great Fire of 1922. Sadly the stream has been filled in and the bridge removed to make way for the present parking lot.

When Patrick Kirk died in 1897, his son John Henry Kirk and his wife Annie Isabella Cogan took over the operation of the hotel. During these early years, the rustic was one of the sites of John Pendlum's annual winter banquets - this was the time when whisky cost 3 cents a glass, and to reserve a hotel room cost $ .50 a day.

After the Great Fire of 1922, the Bell Telephone centre was installed in the hotel, and remained there until 1931. John Henry Kirk died in 1944, and for three years his son John Leo Kirk operated the hotel, before his ill health forced his sister Mary to take on the responsibilities. She continued the family ownership until 1946 when it was sold out of the Kirk family. In 1980 the Morgenroy family of Toronto took possession and undertook the task of a major facelift on a building that has been an important village landmark throughout its existence.

Dundas Street

Looking East Towards the Village Core

The large two storey stone house that stood on the south-west corner of Main and Dundas Streets was demolished in 1962 prior to the erection of the Royal Bank building in the following year. Village residents and several notable families occupying the house, including the Spence, Carson, Johnston, and Aberlight.

Looking east from Flanders, ever... '49

Looking east from the Royal Bank, Main and Dundas Street, Spring 1967

'67

Residential Section

Dundas Street

Looking East from Furniture Street

Sidewalks were still made from boards during the first decade of the twentieth century. Slightly cambered to allow for drainage, the road was dusty in the summer, mud-bound and full of pot holes as the frost came out each spring. Maintenance with horse teams operated by Jack Buchanan, Davy Davies and the Stones continued all summer. Using wagon boxes filled with stones that were dumped in to the highway, and then rolled by steam rollers, it was backbreaking labour. During very dry periods, the road surface was oiled, or dampened down to improve visibility.

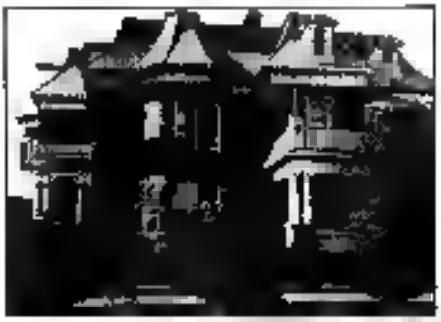
Gas lighting was in place at the turn of the century with standards located at the Mill and Main Street intersections. Electricity came to Waterdown when Sir Adam Beck addressed a mass meeting in the Roller Rink, and officially turned on the hydro September 91

Mr. Crocker Grocery Store on the north-east corner of Dundas and West Street, Cummins' Dray Shed and the Bell Manse Fence.

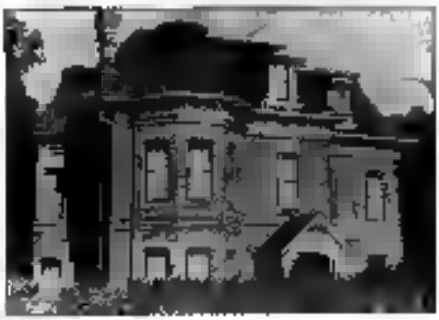
The Crooker House 299 Dundas Street

Built in 1884 for successful Waterdown merchant and druggist William H. Crooker, descendant of an early Flamborough family, this large Victorian mansion is surrounded by attractive grounds. Ownership of the property passed to W.H. Crooker's son at the turn of the century. Frederick W. Crooker also assumed operation of his father's general store at the corner of Main and Dundas Street until it was destroyed by fire in 1915. He served as Waterdown's Postmaster 1906-1927 and as Reeve of the village from 1924 until his death in 1927. He was a popular, hard working politician, and through his efforts, the waterworks system in Waterdown was installed by Ford Carson & Sons.

During the 1940's and 1950's the house was the residence and office of Dr. Reginald Perkins from Hamilton. Lovingly restored to its Victorian splendour by the present owner, the house is now a monumental embellishment known as "The Parlour."



Waterdown Station House c. 1870



Crooker House from Dundas Street c. 1877

Hamilton to Main Street

This small one-and-a-half-storey house in the residential section of Dundas Street appears to have been painted white for much of its life. Constructed of stone blocks over which stucco and paint have been applied, its style is that of a typical Ontario house of the 1860-1875 period with upper windows in the gable with and a central gable above the front entrance.

From time to time commercial businesses have been located in the lower section of the building, with the upper floor serving as a residence. Village residents recall a seamstress and two elderly landlady boarders living in the house in the late 1930s.

The White House, 29 Dundas Street 9

[illegible]

Methodist New Connexion Church— Maycock House

In 1850, one-fifth of an acre of land on the corner of Dundas and Hamilton Street was bought from Russell Smith and James K. Griffin by the Trustees of the Canadian Wesleyan Methodist New Connexion congregation for the purpose of building a village church.

A modest frame church was built on the site and opened within a year, the lot used as a place of worship was very brief, as fifteen years later, the two local Methodist churches united the congregation from this church moving to worship on Mill Street North. No longer required for regular Sunday services, the building became the Sunday School for the two churches between 1874 and 1882.

256 Dundas Street 1967

Mrs. Deborah Jarvis, sister of Waterdown Born, Charles Smiley purchased the building in 1882, and was responsible for its conversion to a private residence. No photographs from the era when it was a church have ever been found, so the original appearance is not known. Some changes can be detected when the exterior is examined, these include the position of the front door, bricked windows and the addition of a second storey.

The house was converted to apartments during the 1960s, and the Wentworth County Health unit opened offices there and paved over the side yard for parking. In 1968 Professor Paul Maycock undertook restoration of the building and property, including the installation of the white picket fence, and small garden filled with many fine examples of unusual Canadian perennials.

1967

Hamilton to Main Street

An ornate and unusual two storey Victorian house made the mid to the residential section on the north side of Dundas Street. This building is one of a diminishing number of private residences along the street, as many of the larger ones have become commercial establishments in the last two decades.

The house has been the home of two well-known Whitehaven residents. During the first half of the century it was owned by Richard "Dick" Smith who served as Reeve of Whitehaven for two years, 1920-1924 and 1932- 943. During his first term in office, the terrible fire of 1923 that destroyed much of the village core occurred. While praising the members of the Hamilton Fire Department who "by their indefatigable efforts saved the village core from further destruction," he vowed to ensure that an adequate water supply and fire fighting equipment be put in place. Neither proposal was enacted during his first term, but his suggestion that only destroyed buildings be erected in the areas in the village was successful.

The Smith - Carson house, 269 Dundas Street - 1977

During the 1930s, the property was purchased by Cecil Carson, a son and member of the famous Whitehaven company, Fred Carson & Sons, responsible for many major construction and highway projects in the province, including the village waterworks and the paving o the Mount [illegible] strip.

993

"Maple Lawn", 292 Dundas Street

Located in the centre of the residential section of Dundas Street, "Maple Lawn" is a large attractive two storey house that dates from the late 1880-1890 period, reputedly designed by Mr. Sproat, a local architect. Constructed of red stretcher bond brick, it has been painted white at some point during its history. Several fine features, including a wide frieze verandah, decorative fanlight transom and round-headed windows on the second floor, high in each of the gables that face Dundas Street make this dwelling one of the finest in the area.

At the rear is a large brick carriage house and left, and reputedly there is a spring well on the east line of the property. Mr. George Allison who described himself as a "gentleman" in the 1898 Wintedown Year's file was probably the builder of this Victorian mansion. He was a local magistrate and an avid collector of Indian relics, many from the Lake Medad area were eventually donated to a collection at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

Mr Harold Greene, the last publisher of the Wintedown Review lived in the house for a brief period, and it is believed that a few of the early papers were produced in the carriage house. During the Depression years the house was converted to a Tourist Home and several out-of-town school teachers boarded there while employed at the High School.

Maple Lawn, 1960

Maple Lawn, November 1967

1994

North East Corner of Dundas and Hamilton Street

The commercial block occupying the north-east corner of Hamilton and Dundas Street included this white stucco house until the 1980s. A variety of businesses have operated from this building alone. During the 1930s and 1940s, a restaurant and garage owned by the Brown family, was a favourite haunt for Senior Waterdown High School students.

Before the house was demolished to make way for a proposed Car Wash, it served as the headquarters of Mrs. Betty Ward's campaign for Mayor of Flamborough in the November 1978 Municipal Election.

In Betty Ward's Campaign Headquarters, north-east corner of Dundas and Hamilton Street. 1978.

1983

North West Corner of Dundas and Hamilton Street

Hamilton Street marks the western entrance to the Village of Waterdown. The Metcalfe store bordering on Hamilton and Dundas Streets was a Market Gardening operation that also included small fruits such as black currants. Commercial strip development in the 1950s heralded the end of farming.

In 1953, a Sunoco Service Station opened, operated by Jack Hodgins, with Bob Waterhouse and Bill Hunter providing repairs to cars and trucks. The property behind gradually reverted to low growing bush until 1987 when the Romei Brothers began the development of the Waterdown Plaza, which by 1993 included such businesses as LCA, Langford's, D.A., Chapters, and the Toronto Dominion Bank.

Ruby Patterson, Ruth Bell, and Bessie Lemon, Metcalfe Farm, Hamilton Street, 1930.

The Waterdown High School Dundas Street

In January 1928, students went the upper floor of Mary Hopkins School on Mill Street North in Waterdown walked over to the new high school that had been constructed on the south-west corner of Hamilton and Dundas Street, at the western entrance to the village. The largest gathering in the history of Waterdown, nearly 800 people, assembled on February 2 1928 to watch the opening ceremonies. Built of red brick, in the Art-Deco style, at a cost of $60,000, with an additional $10,000 for the grounds and equipment, the new school was surrounded by controversy during the early months. The East Flamborough Township Council felt strongly that since the township had contributed 40% of the cost, the words, East Flamborough, should be part of the school's name.

However, at the official opening by Dr. F.W. Merchant, Provincial Director of Education, the name, Waterdown High School, that dated from the school's beginnings in 1853 was given. Later in the same year, the School Board relented, and the name was changed to include the words East Flamborough. The name eventually became Waterdown District High School. Consisting of eight classrooms, a Gymnasium and Assembly Hall for the 250 pupils, it was described as a "progressive enterprise". While the original building had been designed to serve the needs of the community, the growth of Waterdown and changes in attendance during the 1950s necessitated expansion with the construction of additions to the main building in 1954 - 55 and 1967-68.

While the first request for expansion, more classrooms for the teaching of practical subjects, was made to town council in 1953 by Principal F.W. Weldon, supported by Deputy William Tyrell, the claim, that

Waterdown & East Flamborough High School 1928.

Waterdown District High School 1954 - 55.

young people must be sent into life equipped to the best of their ability and we must raise our sights above now and think of what is going to be best for future generations" was made. A claim that was made again almost four decades later and resulted in a new Waterdown District High School being built on Parkside Drive in 1992.

Looking at the intersection of Adair and Decatur Street, 1905- PHL

Acknowledgments

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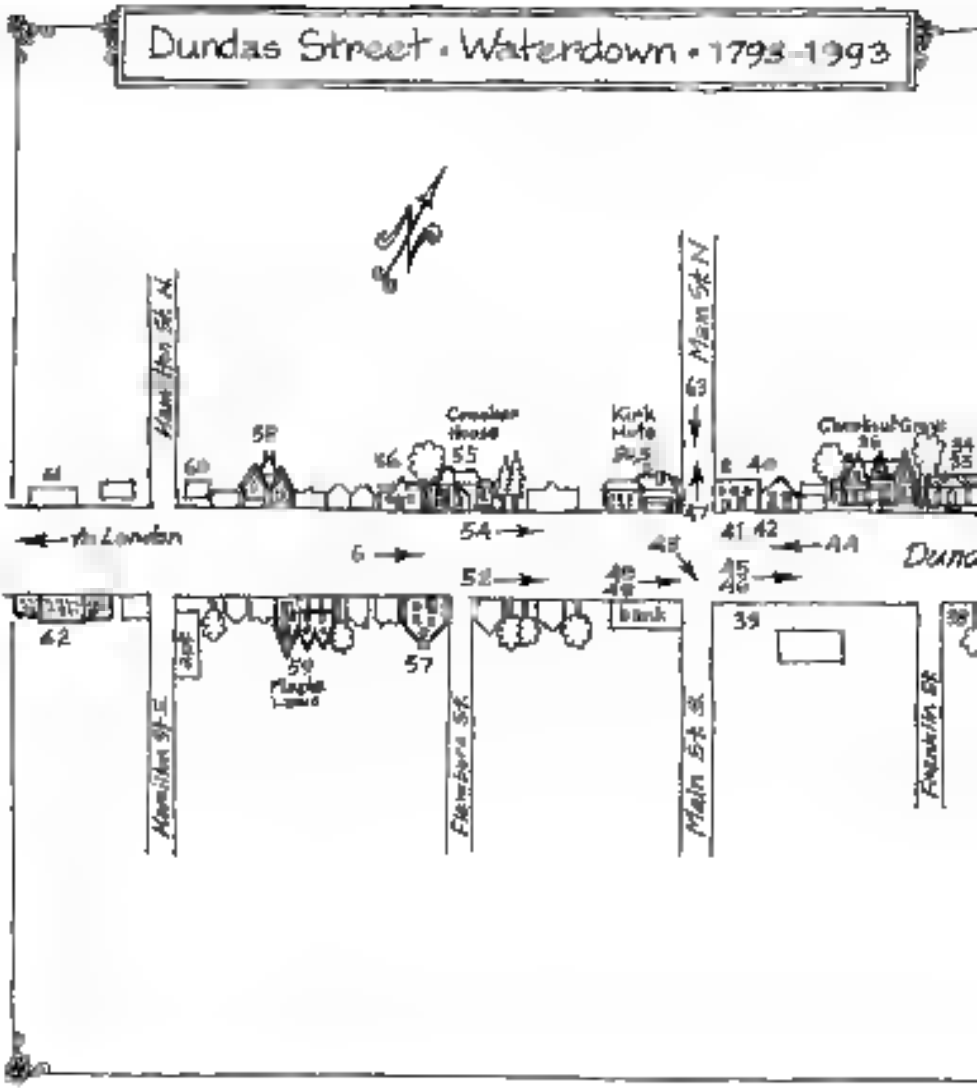
Dundas Street • Waterdown • 1793-1993
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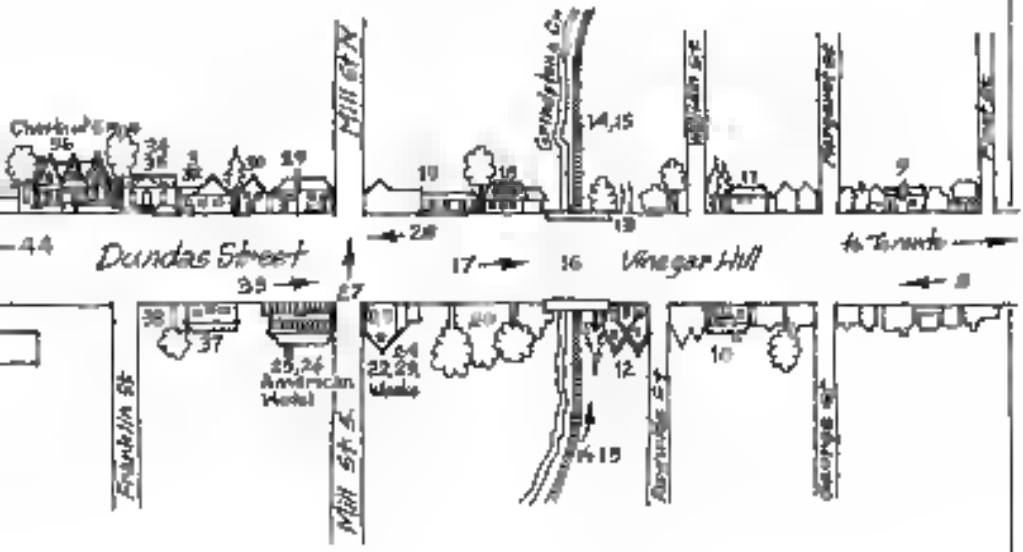

- Numbers refer to page numbers
- ⟶ Arrows indicate direction of view
- Map not to scale

The Waterdown East Flamborough Heritage
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Waterdown

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DUNDAS STREET
Waterdown

1793-1993

Sylvia A Wray
Maurice H Green

The Waterdown-East Flamborough
Heritage Society

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Dundas Street

During the Summer months of 1992 and 1993 with the reconstruction of Highway #5 or Dundas Street, the core of the Village of Waterdown was a permanent scene of potholes, construction equipment and very unhappy motorists. Few people who travelled along this much-used road were aware that this is almost certainly the oldest highway in the Province of Ontario. In 1993 this historic routeway celebrated the bicentennial of its opening.

Dedicated to the memory of
Mrs Ellene Barbara Kennedy
one of the founding members of
The Waterdown-East Flamborough
Heritage Society who worked
tirelessly to preserve the
Heritage of the Village of Waterdown.

Foreword

In 1993 The Waterdown East Flamborough Heritage Society proudly celebrated its 20th Anniversary as a community organization in the Town of Flamborough. Founded to ensure that the local history of the two original communities would not be lost with their elimination through the move to Regional Government on January 1 1974, the Society has grown from a group of dedicated local citizens who met to form the organization, to one that now receives support from members across Canada and the U.S.A.

The Society's Anniversary coincided with two other events: the provincial celebrations of the 200th Anniversary of the opening of the first section of Dundas Street in October 1793 and the completion of the reconstruction and upgrading of Highway #5 (Dundas Street) through the Village of Waterdown. To commemorate all three occasions, the idea of an exhibition of past and present photographs depicting Dundas Street, Waterdown was proposed.

Mrs. Marike Schaltens, Mr. Maurice Green and Mr. Robert Wray, three Society Directors accepted the responsibility for the planning of an exhibition to be entitled "Present Images of Dundas Street Past 1793-1993". Streetscapes, buildings and businesses along Dundas Street were photographed throughout the Spring and Summer of 1993 by Mr. Maurice Green.

Two local high school students were hired to assist with all the preliminary work necessary to mount the Exhibition. Tim Wray, attending Guido de Bres High School, Hamilton was given the responsibility of locating historical photographs of buildings, businesses and events along the road. Lori Dedman, a graduate of Waterdown District High School was hired to research the history behind the chosen photographs. Many long time residents of the village spent an afternoon reminiscing about this section of Dundas Street and Society members and friends loaned additional photographs that were copied for the exhibition.

At the end of the Summer, the photographs and text were compiled by Mr. Green and the Society's Archivist, Sylvia Wray, and arranged into a set of forty plates for a display that would allow visitors to take a stroll along historic Dundas Street. To enhance the exhibition, local artist Mrs. Patricia Green designed a map identifying the various buildings and sites that were on display.

On Thursday, October 29, 1993, Mr. Peter Vance, the Society's first President officially opened the three day Exhibition at Grace Anglican Church Parish Hall on Mill Street North. To the delight of the Society's Board of Directors, the Exhibition was an overwhelming success, with many people returning for a second visit. The Guest Book recorded visitors from throughout the Hamilton-Burlington and Golden Horseshoe area reflecting the interest of people in such a unique project. As a result of the numerous comments about the value of such an exhibition to the community's history, the Society decided that the photographs should become a permanent record of the history of Dundas Street, Waterdown.

Retaining the same format of historical photographs matched with present day ones and accompanied by a brief text, Mr. Green and Mrs. Wray undertook the task of transforming the exhibition plates into a book during the summer of 1994.

With the completion of this project, it is the Society's hope that this record of Waterdown's main thoroughfare, Dundas Street, will be enjoyed by young and old, resident and visitor, and that the stories long associated with it will never be forgotten.

Crooker's store, c.1895

Dundas Street

York. October 1793: "Captain Smith is returned from cutting the road named Dundas. It is opened for 20 miles. They met with quantities of wild grapes, and put some of the juice in barrels to make vinegar, and Captain Smith told me it turned out very tolerable wine"

In these few lines from her highly informative and often witty diary, Mrs. John Graves Simcoe, wife of Upper Canada's first Lieutenant Governor, records the beginnings of this famous old Ontario road.

Although John Graves Simcoe is credited with the original idea of constructing this early highway, the first proposal actually came from his father. Prior to his appointment by the British government, Simcoe had served in the American Revolutionary War, and while there his father had collected old French maps. Among those which he obtained, one showed a fur trading route from the vicinity of present day Dundas to the upper waters of the Thames River.

On his arrival in Upper Canada in 1792, Simcoe's primary task was to initiate and supervise settlement. He was also given the responsibility of formulating plans to deal with the overwhelming fear of invasion from the recently liberated American colonies. His father presented him with the suggestion that a waterway dug along the fur trader's route would provide an inland passage, well back from the border and relatively safe from a surprise attack.

After studying the suggestion, and with the expectation of imminent border attacks, John Graves Simcoe and a military party travelled through the western part of the province, from Niagara to the border at Windsor during the winter of 1793. Guided by Indians, and following their trails by foot and sleigh where possible, Simcoe came to the conclusion that a road would be superior since it would be multi-purpose, serving as a military link between Lakes Ontario, Erie, St. Clair and Huron, and as a spur to settlement. Simcoe also reasoned that the American control of shipping on the Great Lakes was certain for several years, and therefore an inland route was the only way to ensure the safe movement of troops and supplies.

The decision to relocate the capital of the province from Newark, to a site on the Thames River, where London stands today, initiated the start of the highway. Simcoe believed that this new inland capital was a safer location and could be linked to Lake Ontario by the highway he planned, the road running from the Thames to Burlington Bay. From here there would be a link with the network of trails going eastwards to York and onto Kingston, and with a north-south route joining York with Lake Simcoe.

With his surveyor, Augustus Jones, and accompanied by a guide, Jean Baptiste Rousseau, Lt. Governor John Graves Simcoe selected the exact spot where the work would begin. They entered Burlington Bay from the lake, and proceeded through the marsh at the eastern end, choosing a site that was a known Indian landing place. Jones began his survey immediately, using a line marked at an angle of 70 degrees west that ran from Coote's Paradise to the upper forks of the Thames River, a distance of eighty miles.

Work on this first or western section of the route that today is often referred to as "The Governor's Road" went as far as the Mohawk Village on the Grand River where Joseph Brant was chief. The actual road cutting under the direction of a Captain Smith, and a company of men of the Queen's Rangers was completed in less that a month. But opening a road in 1793 involved nothing more than clearing a corridor through the bush, leaving the bigger stumps to rot and often going around very large groups of trees.

York: September 23, 1793: "Captain Smith has gone to open a road to be called Dundas Street, from the head of the Lake to River La Tranche. He has 100 men with him. I hear that they kill

rattlesnakes everyday yet not a man has been bitten... Captain Smith sent two of the snakes in a barrel that I might see them, they were dark and ugly and make a whizzing sound in shaking their rattles when I touched them with a stick"

The second section of the highway begun in the spring of 1794 went as far as the site of the planned new capital London However the departure of Lt Governor Simcoe from Canada before the road had actually reached the site and his decision to designate York (Toronto) the official capital, caused work to almost cease completely Within months, this primitive single-lane pathway began to grow over again and revert to forest, only Simcoe's foresight saved the road from oblivion.

Immediately work on the trail from Dundas had begun, Governor Simcoe authorized that grants of land along its route be made to the military personnel who had opened it Although many of these grants were not taken up as farms, enough traffic was generated to make it worthwhile for the new owners to accept the responsibility of keeping their portion of the road open Acceptance of such a land grant required that the pioneer keep his frontage clear For the new settler the road was his lifeline of transport, and to Governor Simcoe, it ensured the viability of his road. Even though it remained as little more than a primitive path with mud holes that as one early humorist wrote, "stretched from one spot to the next" it ensured that the settlement of Upper Canada would come

Stretching from Burlington Bay to York the second and eastward section of the highway that bore the name Dundas Highway after Henry Dundas who was Home Secretary and responsible for Colonial Affairs was not begun until a decade later

Since water transportation along the north shore of Lake Ontario was good, there was not the urgency to build the eastern section of the road that Simcoe considered to be so important. In 1805 the great block of land that lay beyond the eastern boundary of East Flamborough Township was finally purchased from the Mississauga Indians This tract or hunting ground was the entire area between Burlington Bay and the Humber River Simcoe honoured the Mississauga's land rights, and although settlers had to cross the Indian's territory more and more frequently as the old capital of Newark was transferred to York, the Lt. Governor refused to force the Mississaugas to give up their land Finally in 1806 an agreement was reached and the government took possession of the land, the Indians gradually dispersing to the Grand River and Montreal area.

In the same year, Nelson Township was opened to settlers. Onto the newly surveyed land, families with names such as Bostelo, Hopkins, Markle Calvert, Zimmerman Bennett, Rose, King and Chisholm soon settled Several of these people were already on the land or had requested the location prior to the official opening. With the arrival of the settlers the opening of a road to the east and the capital of York began.

The road was surveyed and constructed several miles back from the lakeshore to avoid the difficulty of bridging the wide mouths of the many creeks and streams that crossed the area, and for greater safety in transporting troops and supplies in time of war. Much of the construction work on this eastern section of Dundas Street was under the direction of an American road builder called Asa Danforth at a cost of $90 a mile.

Since this construction work involved nothing more than clearing a corridor through the bush, leaving the bigger stumps to rot and little else the complaint by Danforth later that he lost money on the contract seems difficult to believe

After serving several generations of settlers and changing from a footpath to a single-lane track that could accommodate wagons and carts to the present day thoroughfare through Etobicoke and Mississauga this highway has been the scene of tremendous change during its two hundred years Hundreds of stories and incidents are associated with it, but so many of them are now forgotten by the passage of time.

The historic village of Waterdown that Dundas Street passes through on its way westwards towards London is full of such stories and incidents. Built upon land that was originally granted to Lt. Alexander McDonnell in 1796, the area remained undeveloped until 1805 when the second phase of the Dundas Street construction commenced.

Alexander Brown, an agent of the North West Company, purchased property from McDonnell in 1806 and within a year built a sawmill at the falls on Grindstone Creek. The enterprises of Brown, and later Ebenezer Griffin during the 1820s and 1830s accounted for substantial industrial growth in the creek valley.

The first Common School was built in 1826 on the south-west corner of Flamboro and Dundas Street. Mill Street South and Franklin Street were the only north-south roads opened to the south of Dundas Street by the 1830s, providing access to milling sites just above the Great Falls and along the Grindstone Creek. On the east bank of the Grindstone only Board Street ran north off Dundas along the river bank, and Spring Street ran south.

In 1831 Ebenezer Griffin prepared a village plan for Waterdown, and during the next decade sold a number of village lots, primarily west of Mill Street along Dundas Street. With his brother and business partner, Absalom, he continued to add to his industrial holdings with the construction of another sawmill and a carding mill. Soon other pioneer settlers were attracted to the potential power of the Grindstone and purchased lots, several of them with water privileges. Names such as Hawke, Graham and Cummins accelerated the industrial development of the creek. This area later to become known as Smokey Hollow was fuelled by dams and raceways, and was the site of saw, grist and flour mills, a woollen mill, brass foundry, tanneries, rake, snath, cradle and basket factories.

By the date of the first Village Assessment in 1841, the village population totalled 165 people, many of them engaged in milling and the commercial establishments that had begun to develop along the narrow Dundas Highway which was the only access to the interior of the area and the principal east-west route between Toronto and Dundas.

In 1878, Waterdown was incorporated as a village. The last years of the nineteenth century were ones of general population decline. A series of fires, floods and dwindling water power in the Grindstone Creek heralded the end of Waterdown's milling industries. Early in the twentieth century several major fires destroyed many of the older commercial structures along Dundas Street, dramatically changing the face of the Village of Waterdown.

Looking east towards the village core and Vinegar Hill, 1900

Vinegar Hill Section

Vinegar Hill

The eastern entrance to Waterdown descends gently through tree-lined Vinegar Hill, the oldest section of this historic village.

The name appears to have been in use from earliest times, and may have been given because of the many market gardens with apple orchards that lined the hill. Much of this apple crop was required for the production of cider which was made from late summer onwards using the windfalls and bruised fruit. With no modern refrigeration available for the storage of the cider, it had a very short life before fermentation began to change the cider to vinegar. By the early Fall, the smell of fermenting apples was almost certainly noticeable to residents and visitors as they entered the village, and may explain the origin of the name.

Settlement along Dundas Street had begun by the time Ebenezer Culver Griffin prepared a village plan for Waterdown in 1831. By 1841 there were approximately 48 households listed on the Assessment Rolls for Waterdown. Most of these houses were located on the east bank of the Grindstone Creek in the Vinegar Hill area and consisted of one storey log or frame cottages facing onto Dundas Street.

Between 1831 and 1850 a small burying ground for the village was opened on Vinegar Hill. Through donations of land from George Bush to the Reverend David Culp and Trustees of the Waterdown Chapel of the Methodist Episcopal Church and Absalom Griffin to the Trustees of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the Union Cemetery was established. Within the grounds of this peaceful cemetery dozens of stones to pioneer settlers with names such as Baker, Griffin, Smoke, Culp and Brown are to be found recording the hardships of the early years.

Looking down Vinegar Hill 90

Vinegar Hill from First Street

993

Kirby House

Originally part of a two hundred acre Crown Grant to Ebenezer Culver Griffin in 1837, this house on the north side of Vinegar Hill is one of the oldest in the village. Between 1839 and 1855, ownership of the property is unclear. This is probably the time period during which the rear section, which is the oldest part of the house was constructed. Land Registry documents and entries on the Assessment Rolls suggest William Lang or George Bush as the first owners. George Will and his wife Hannah, a member of the Horning family were owners from 1855 to 1863.

Kirby House, 357 Dundas Street, Summer 1977

The rear section of the dwelling built of coarse or rubble stone dates from the 1839-1855 period, while the front one-and-a-half storey board and batten section dates from a later period, c 1860-1870. One of the most interesting features of the house clearly visible from Dundas Street is the wooden verandah with ornate brackets on the pillars of the board and batten section.

Like many houses on this side of Vinegar Hill, the rear property was used for Market Gardening during the first half of this century. There were large greenhouses in the backyard of this house until the late 1960s, possibly remnants from the time when James H. Balfour a Waterdown Market Gardener, owned the property.

1993

Raycroft Cottage

This charming single storey cottage on Vinegar Hill dates from the 1860-1870 period and is one of several similar cottages to be found in the village. Built close to the street, its simple design is in sharp contrast to the larger and more ornate houses to the west. Constructed of clapboard, overlaid with white board and batten and with a low hip roof, the dwelling sits on a stone foundation with 18 inch thick walls.

Several well known Watertown names appear in the Registry Book as owners of the property: Featherston (1880-1920), Vance (1930s), Shutt (1940s) and Hamilton (1950s).

Reverend George Richardson, a Methodist minister serving Watertown and the surrounding area is among the earliest documented owners of the house. Reputedly, Mrs. Richardson's sister lived with them during the time they were stationed in Watertown and the two ladies were renowned as avid horse racing fans.

The Raycroft Cottage 348 Dundas Street, Summer 1979

99

Pillé House

In 1977 Mr. "Mickey" Rocket, a longtime village resident recalled that this home was originally a one storey log cottage. Unfortunately the building has been altered several times, even the rubble lower storey and board and batten upper level have been covered since the William Reid photograph recorded its appearance c 1910.

The house was formerly entered from Dundas Street but, possibly to ease traffic flow along Vinegar Hill, it is now accessed off William Street.

The Pillé house 343 Dundas Street, 19-0

993

Eager House

One of the fine Victorian residences in the village, this house was built for the Eager family c 1875, and remained in their ownership for three generations virtually unaltered.

The patriarch of the family Benjamin Eager emigrated from Ireland in 1837, settling in Lowville with his son Joseph, a merchant. Joseph, with his family came to Watertown and was the builder of this house. In 1873 with his two sons James and Joseph Jr. he purchased Griffin's General Store at the south-east corner of Mill and Dundas Street. They continued to operate it until 1924 with a variety of merchandise which included groceries, dry goods, boots, shoes, hardware and wallpaper.

Eager House, 340 Dundas Street Summer 1977

The house is constructed of cut stone with a rough cut and fine cement facing that was added around the turn of the century. Over the years, the facing has been painted a variety of colours. The most noticeable features of the house are the unusual portico with intricate woodwork of a sun motif flanked by fans, and the beautifully carved bargeboard of the gables.

1993

Board Street and the Dundas Street Bridge

Located at the foot of Vinegar Hill, Board Street descended steeply to the Grindstone Creek, the Varnie House, and by travelling along the banks of the creek, to Will Reid's barn.

This area, between Reid's Dam just upstream, and the bridge was the site of several small mills between 1835 and 1911 although today no evidence remains. A running mill that belonged to the Reid family was virtually destroyed by the demands of the railway as it moved into the Grindstone Creek valley and it ended its life as a large barn. Fondly remembered as a favourite playground for the children of the Vinegar Hill area, the old wooden mill-turned-barn housed a wonderful collection of fancy pigeons, the property of Will Reid, the renowned Waterdown photographer of the early twentieth century who captured so much of the village's history with his camera.

View across the valley. The Waterdown Evaporator and Jam Factory, and Slater's Saw Mill line the edge of the road c.1900.

Before the railway came to Waterdown, the Reid and Slater Mills had faced each other across the Grindstone Creek. It appears from reminiscences of some villagers that the two owners were not always on good terms. It is recalled that Henry Slater often shouted across the creek at John Reid, Will's father: "My mill will be turning out lumber when yours is housing pigeons!"

1993

The Waterdown South Railway Station

The coming of the railway to the village of Waterdown resulted in the relocation of the Grindstone Creek to the west side of the valley. Much of the project was done with hand labour throughout the summer and winter of 1910 and 1911. The physical changes complete, the tracks were laid on oak ties and first class gravel which was quarried in the C.P.R.'s own pit in Waterdown. The actual line from Hamilton to Guelph Junction, a stretch of 19 miles took two years to complete at a cost of a million dollars. The construction workers lived in tents which were located in Smokey Hollow, and the surveyor and engineer boarded at the old Post Office on Main Street South.

Prior to the official opening of the C.P.R. Guelph Junction line on July 1 1912, John and Ada Vance's large two storey house was converted to become the village railway station. The building also served as the Station Master's home and operated until 1962 when the station closed and the last Station Master, George McKay left.

During the early years of the railway the station, known officially as the South Waterdown Station was a hive of activity. Students from as far away as Campbellville took the train daily to Waterdown High School. The local farmers used the line to take their produce to the Hamilton Market every morning, and freight for the village and surrounding area was delivered for pick-up.

Gradually as more and more people began to purchase cars, the passenger service was no longer needed, and in 1950 the C.P.R. discontinued the service, and since then, the line has only been used for freight.

Railway construction in front of the Vance House c.1911

The Dundas Street Bridge and Waterdown South Station, formerly the Vance House c.1912

993

993

Dundas Street Bridge

With the arrival of the railway in 1911 the Dundas Street Bridge extending over Grindstone Creek was raised by Fred Carson & Sons. Since that first major structural change to the bridge several more have been required as heavier demands have been placed upon it.

During 1965-1966, while the Gaffney Construction Company was working on the Bridge they used the upstairs rooms of the old Waterdown South Railway Station as a storage shed, and the downstairs as an office for their staff. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company arranged with Gaffney to demolish the station once they had finished their work. When the time came, Gaffney decided that the easiest way to get rid of the old building would be to burn it.

Waterdown Reeve, Orly Gunby and Fire Commissioner, Ted Appleby refused to give permission on the grounds that the village had a By-Law which prohibited the setting of fires in June, July and August – but on the night of June 23, 1966 vandals did the job for them!

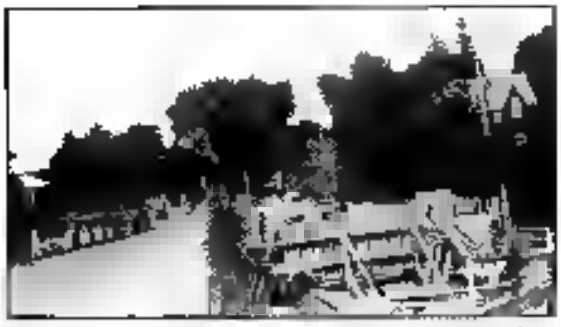
Over 250 people stood on the new Dundas Street Bridge and watched the station go up in flames. This closed the history on the Waterdown South Railway Station, and was the last major fire along Dundas Street.

Dundas Street Bridge 1905

Dundas Street Bridge and Eager's House 1906

Road work on Dundas Street Bridge 1922-1925

Looking east up Iron Road Vinegar Hill to the eastern entrance of Waterdown at First Street c.1930.



Road work on Dundas Street Bridge by Gaffney Construction Company; c.1965.

1993

1993

The Mitchell-Peer House

Pete and Sara Mitchell outside their new 2-3 Peter Mitchell ran his painting and decorating business in the village

The Board on Green with the house. The property enclosed by a decorative fence, originally extended westwards towards the north-east corner block of Mill and Thurston Street.

The Peer House c.1988. Mr. Fred Peer sold him big terrace for the area. The house was burnt to the ground rather mysteriously in the 1990's. Later, Mr. Ralph Maccarrio redeveloped the area with a small collection of specialty shops.

1993

Raphael's Cottage

Nestled between the north-east corner block of Mill and Dundas Streets and the Peer House a small one storey frame building housed a variety of village businesses. During the 1940's, Mr. Elmer King and his son-in-law, Ted Sherwin, operated King's Butcher Shop from the building. In the 1950's the name changed to Sherwin's Grocery and Meat Store, and in 1957 the Waterdown Library moved into the premises from the Memorial Hall. The Library remained until 1970 when it moved again to the Haynes Building on Mill Street South.

Mr. Ralph Naccarato the last owner had a paint and wallpaper business in the rear section and his wife operated a lady's dress shop at the front. During the 1980's, Mr. Naccarato demolished the building, and on purchasing the neighbouring Peer property and house, replaced them with a two storey commercial/ residential block containing a group of specialty shops.

Raphael's Cottage Dundas Street c.1960

1993

The Eager-Weeks Block to Dundas Street Bridge

Between the rear section of the Eager-Weeks Block and the Dundas Street Bridge, a small group of buildings owned by the Eager family existed until c.1980. Now almost forgotten, they were a part of Dundas Street's ever changing streetscape that has disappeared with the increasing demands for parking and commercial development.

Lewis [illegible] 97. Covered with modern siding, the house was last rented to the Lewis and Downs families before demolition c 1982

Double House c 1905. Board and batten construction with decorative fence similar to the Mitchell House across the road.

Looking west to Mill Street intersection from Dundas Street Bridge c.1978. Small cottage and large garage where Eager's cars were stored.

993

Commercial Section

The Eager-Weeks Block

South-East Corner of Mill and Dundas Streets

The magnificent stone building on the south-east corner of Mill and Dundas Streets is instantly recognizable to thousands of people in Flamborough and the surrounding area as once being the home of Weeks of Waterdown.

The corner building actually consists of four separate sections, although in all probability the entire block was developed at the same time c 1824-1830. Fires, structural changes and additions over the years have wrought great changes and allowed each individual section to have its own architectural style. A prime location at the crossroads of trade and travel in the village has ensured stable ownership, as the building has changed hands infrequently during the past 170 years.

The oldest, and probably the only original section is the impressive corner one with its steep side gable roof atop a parapet wall, constructed of rubble stone parged and striped to resemble dressed stone. Local tradition suggests that this building was constructed soon after Ebenezer Culver Griffin's purchase in 1821, possibly as early as 1824, and that the family operated a General Store in the building until it was sold to the Eager family in 1873. In fact, E.C. Griffin sold the property to Daniel Cummins in 1839 and like his brief ownership of the neighbouring American Hotel, was probably relinquished because of his involvement with the rapidly developing milling industry in the Grindstone Valley.

The second section was erected c.1850 after the original frame building burned and was rebuilt several times. The third section was once the site of a detached barn that was used for the delivery horses until the 1940s. Demolished for the Weeks family c.1948 the building was replaced almost immediately due to the demands for an expansion of their hardware department within the General Store.

The final or fourth portion of the block was acquired by William Featherston in 1890 who operated a bakery on the premises. The previous owner of this section James Rodgers, also a baker, suffered a disastrous fire in 1883 that not only destroyed much of his bakery but also threatened the rest of the Eager Block. In the early 1900s, the rear apartment was added to the building by the Featherstons. Many older residents of the village recall the south wall of the apartment collapsing when the horse barn in the third section was being removed, thus exposing to view the inside of the

Eager's General Store c. 1904

Featherston's home. The Weeks family promptly purchased this final section of the building thus returning the whole block to one ownership.

From the 1840s, this corner of Waterdown was a popular stopping place for farmers from as far as Guelph who would drive their wagons down to Brown's Wharf (Aldershot) with their grain and produce, and after selling it return home through the village. For some it was an annual trip during which they would purchase their supplies for the year, for others, they would spend the night in one of Waterdown's seven hotels, including one that was reputedly located above the store.

In 1873 the store was bought by the Eager Brothers who moved their business to Waterdown from their previous general store in Nelson Township. Both James Edward and his brother Joseph shared the responsibility for operating the Eager Brother's General Store for over 40 years. Although in competition with the general stores on Main Street operated by F.W. Crooker and O.B. Griffin, Eager's reputation for its warmth and hospitality and the wonderful variety of merchandise made it very popular.

George Weeks purchased the Eager Store in December 1924, and so began the long tradition associated with "Weeks of Waterdown" that saw it grow from a small general store to a unique hardware establishment that was based upon good service and personal attention.

When the family arrived to take up residence the hitching posts for horses and front verandah were still in place. However one night after returning to the store from the Township Hall where he had gone to deliver coffee, Ernie Weeks, George's son heard a loud crash at the front of the store. Looking through the window he noticed the northern section of the verandah roof had caved in from heavy snow sliding off the roof above. Afraid that someone might have been passing when it collapsed, Ernie and others spent an anxious time shovelling the snow off the sidewalk before finding that no one had been trapped.

Besides the usual store merchandise, "Weeks" was once a cheese factory. George Weeks discovered that the temperature in the stone basement of the corner block was fairly constant and remained at the correct level to age cheese. When ready for sale, a length of piano wire

Jessop Pharmacy in Weeks Building, August 1963

American House and Weeks of Waterdown, c 1967

was drawn through the 80 pound slabs to cut the cheese into saleable pieces. These were then waxed to preserve their freshness and high quality. Described as "good old cheese"... its reputation brought customers from far and wide to Watertown.

After George Weeks died, Emile operated the store, slowly allowing the business to progress from a general store to a hardware store that gained an area-wide reputation for the stock that it carried and thus coining the phrase "You'll be sure to find it at Weeks of Watertown."

Weeks of Watertown 1980.

1993

North American Hotel / American Hotel / American House

As soon as the first road was cut through Upper Canada's wilderness, hotels, taverns and inns appeared like magic along the way, and the innkeeper, that "Jack-of-all Trades" in the pioneer community opened his establishment for business.

With the opening of the Governor's Road through the little settlement of Waterdown, entrepreneur Ebenezer C. Griffin saw great potential in the area with the proximity of waterpower on the Grindstone Creek and the location of this road. The south-west corner, the present day site of the American Hotel, was part of the first piece of property that he purchased from Crown Patentee, Alexander Brown in 1821. Construction probably took place almost immediately as both his General Store on the opposite corner and the Hotel are believed to have been in operation by 1824-1830.

By 1828 Plumer Burley of Ancaster had begun a stage-coach line between Ancaster and York that left Ancaster at 4 am each Monday Wednesday and Friday arriving at York an exhausting eleven hours later. In 1833 William Weller's Stage Line was carrying passengers westwards from York. So within a decade of the hotel opening, there was a steady passenger trade in place.

Possibly because of his involvement in the Temperance Movement, or the developing milling industry that he was promoting, Griffin only owned the hotel for a short period, the property being sold to Alexander Markle, an innkeeper in 1832.

Stage Coach, front steps of North American Hotel 1900-1905.

Travelling salesman's wagon and American Hotel Staff on west side of building c 1905

Throughout its long history the hotel has been known by a variety of names, including, North American Hotel and American House. It has also been owned and operated by many different innkeepers. In Smith's 1846 Gazetteer, the Village of Waterdown is recorded as possessing two hotels, one of which was almost certainly the American Hotel, with Mr. Samuel Anderson as proprietor. Possibly because of its prestigious location this building has remained a permanent hostelry serving the travellers on both the east-west and north-south routes through the area – and thus making it one of the oldest hotels in Ontario.

Among the known owners and innkeepers were Samuel Anderson (1837-1869), John and Thomas Stuart (1875) who had come to Canada from Scotland in 1871, Michael Doyle (1880s), James H. Cooper (1884-1885) and Samuel Cook (1885-1904). For a brief period following Mr. Cook's death, the hotel was owned by Richard Motley but in 1911, his widow, Mary Cook returned to

operate it until 1926. During prohibition, the hotel was closed, reopening in 1933 with proprietors William Condrum and F. Stanley.

Many grand social events have been held in the building over the years. At one time, an archway in the Mill Street wall was the entrance to a passageway through which carriages could drive. This allowed the ladies to alight inside the hotel, a great convenience, especially if they were dressed for an evening in the upstairs ballroom. The archway was later closed in to make an apartment, but for many years after the outline was still visible through the paintwork.

Early car passing the American Hotel c 1910.

Before the turn of the century, the hotel was the site of a winter banquet hosted by Agricultural implements Agent John Pridham for his customers. This renowned social occasion alternated annually between the American and Kirk Hotels and followed the arrival of the farm machinery at the Watertown Grand Trunk Railway Station, and a spectacular procession up the Watertown Road.

During the last thirty years, the interior of the hotel has been drastically altered, both to modernize and serve the demands of the public. In 1965 the wall between the segregated male and female front rooms was eliminated, and during the 1980s, the original wooden floors, tin ceiling in the front section, and the last old-time stand-up bar in Ontario were removed. But despite these changes, the American Hotel continues to be one of the landmarks in the commercial life of the village.

1993

Mill and Dundas Street Intersection

Unlike Main and Dundas, the Mill and Dundas Street intersection has not experienced great change. The building on the north-west corner, popularly known as the J T Stock Building, dates from the 1850s and has housed many businesses during its history.

The Watertown Mechanic's Institute met in the upstairs section of the building from the time of construction and had their Library there. Although the Institute grew in its early years, membership declined as education became available, and the last meeting was held on May 9 1884.

The first telephone line in Watertown was installed in John Stock's store in May 1882 and for the next twenty-three years, this was the only telephone in the village. In 1900 George Reid rented the store for his harness repair business. He worked during the night instead of the day – possibly because farmers would bring in broken equipment after a day's work and require it to be fixed by the next day.

The Trader's Bank occupied the downstairs part of the building from 1909 and in 1911 installed a vault on the premises, subject to the condition that it was to be removed if and when they vacated. The Royal Bank bought the whole building in 1923 and remained at this location until the new Bank was built at Dundas and Main in 1963.

G.M. Reid Harness Shop J T Stock Building north west corner Mill and Dundas Street c 1900

Looking northwards Dundas and Mill Street intersection 1914

1993

Dundas Street

Looking west from the Mill Street North Intersection

North side showing Metzger's Timber Shop, J. Bucher's Bakery and the Bell House and Tower c.1901-1905.

North side showing Royal Bank of Canada on the north-west corner of Mill and Dundas Streets c.1918.

North side showing The Hub Antiques Shop which replaced Hanley Brothers Groceries and Butcher Shop c.1982.

991

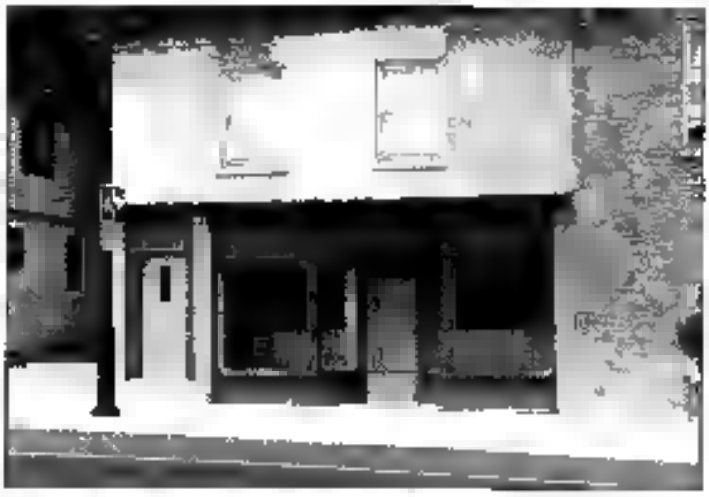
Huxley Brothers Shop Dundas Street

The western section of the J T Stork building has housed commercial businesses for over one hundred and twenty years, probably due to the building's prime location at such a well travelled Waterdown intersection. Constructed of stucco over squared rubble the L-shaped Huxley building was designed to house a private residence upstairs and a business at street level typical of merchant store designs in the 1850s.

In 1941 the Huxley brothers, Dan and Tom, followed T E. Carey Groceries and Meats into the building. Between 1941 and 1980, the brothers developed a reputation of kindness towards those who were facing difficulties. They delivered produce to customers who were sick, allowed those who were experiencing financial difficulties to pay later, and alerted relatives when regular customers did not come into the shop

Daniel and Tom Huxley outside their Grocery and Butcher Shop c. 1980.

Mr. Daniel Huxley inside the Huxley Store



1993

Main to Mill Street

Next to the J T Stock Block on the north side of Dundas Street, Philip Metzger's Barber shop also housed the Waterdown Library c.1900-1905. Peter Perry, the High School Principal acted as librarian and set up a reading room in the front of the building where a little wood stove was installed for the winter months.

Metzger [illegible] in the window of [illegible] with boys [illegible] from left to right are Charles Burns, Ed Cahill, Art Featherston, Walter McGregor, Herbert Green, Fred Smith, Osmond Smith, John Colyer and John Doyle.

1997

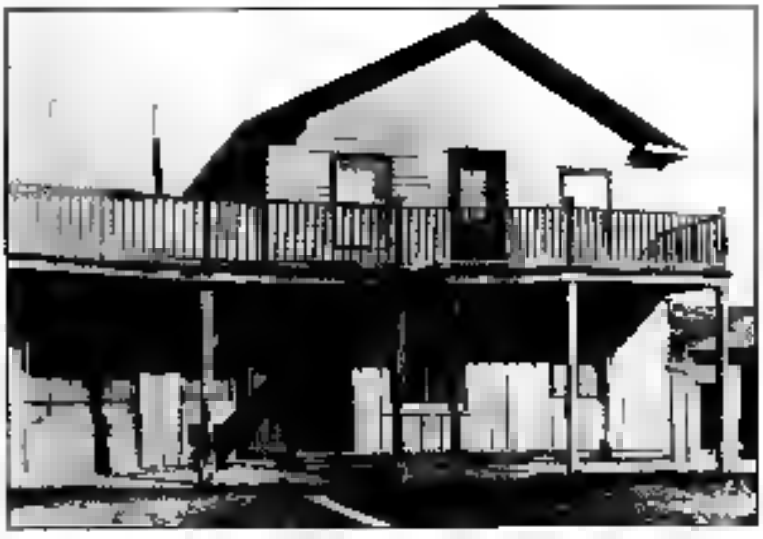
The Antiques Plus Shop, Dundas Street

Dramatically changed from the date of photographs taken between 1890-1914 the building has housed numerous Waterdown businesses during the past hundred and thirty years.

High in the gable of Edward's Bakery that existed at the turn of the century the name of the Boadicea Hotel can be seen beneath the layers of fading paint. This dates the building's existence from c.1865-1867 Alexander Somerville writing in the Daily Spectator on September 16, 1867 following a visit described Waterdown as lay winking in the noontide sun one of its sleepy taverns bearing the ancient British name of Boadicea

Although numerous renovations have occurred throughout the years, the original fieldstone used during the construction can be seen at the rear, and the large bakery's ovens used in the early 1900s remain in the back section of the building

Main Market in the corner section, ownership unknown c.1890.



[illegible] 1900-1902

Burham's Bakery 1901 1914

993

Dundas Street

Looking East towards Vinegar Hill

During the early years of the twentieth century Dundas Street was still a dirt road, but well groomed to accommodate both wagons and automobiles. Sidewalks were made of wooden boards, and several businesses had covered walkways to afford customers protection from the elements. The road was paved in the 1930s, when further work was done on the Dundas Street Bridge and concrete sidewalks were installed in the commercial section of the village.

Looking east 1905.

2007

The Bell House and Tower Section, Dundas Street

During the early years of this century a group of frame buildings that included The Bell House and Tower together with several other businesses were to be found in the central section of the north side. All were removed to allow for the construction of the present day Memorial Hall erected to honour the veterans of World War I.

The Bell House and Tower were erected in 1874. The first village election in 1878 and the first Council meeting are recorded as being held in this building. The Third Divisional Court for the County of Wentworth and the Village Lock-up were housed in the building as was the Fire Department's sole hand pumper.

Capping the tall wooden tower was the village bell tolled at the start and finish of each work day as well as to alert residents of community emergencies. After the building was demolished the bell, so much a part of village life was retained and even proudly mounted at the front of the Memorial Hall.

In 1920 the Waterdown Women's Institute purchased the site, and with various church groups, undertook the raising of funds to build a community hall. Construction began in the Spring of 1922, and miraculously the partly-built structure was not damaged by the Great Waterdown Fire of that year. Some of the workers actually saw the fire that started in the Barrel Factory on Franklin Street jump to the Roller Rink, raised the alarm and then rushed to see what they could pull from the building.

The construction was completed in the late Fall, and the Waterdown Review proudly described the hall as "an example of what a small community can achieve when united in a common goal."

The building was officially opened on January 24, 1923, although it had been dedicated the previous Sunday afternoon when a large number of people gathered for the special service and unveiling of a tablet to honour the soldiers who had enlisted from the village and given their lives in the Great War of 1914-1918.

View of Cummins' Drug Store and the Bell House and Tower 1910

Lower section of the Bell House and Tower with office of the Wiarton Review c.1918

1993

"Chestnut Grove", Dundas Street

On November 2, 1987 the Town of Flamborough passed By Law #87 150-H that designated this building and grounds at 315 Dundas Street as a property of architectural and historical interest under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Known as 'Chestnut Grove' the building houses a number of community organizations serving the Town of Flamborough and is open to the general public.

Built in 1850 by prosperous local lumber merchant, Charles Sealey first Reeve of Waterdown, the house was built around an earlier one. The addition was constructed to face Dundas Street, while the earlier house had faced Main Street. Great care was taken by Mr. Sealey's builder to match the brick work and window openings of the original house so that today only an expert can detect the evidence of an earlier building.

Today the building is entered through a handsome oak door with etched and frosted glass. Many fine interior features remain including a wide Victorian staircase with a decorative carved newel post, decorative plaster ceilings and a magnificent marble fireplace with metal screen. One special feature of the house is the small second-storey porch above the front door. A round-headed door from the second floor hallway leads onto the ornately decorated porch, allowing a fine view over the village of Waterdown.

Charles Sealey gave the name "Chestnut Grove" to his property, possibly from the large number of Horse Chestnut trees that were growing on the land behind his house. Even today odd remnants of these trees can be seen in the neighbourhood. Miraculously this house suffered no damage from the fires that devastated the commercial establishments just to the west of it between 1906 and 1922.

Charles Sealey's House c 1880.

993

Vacant Property after Demolition of the George Potts House

South-East Corner of Franklin Street

The commercial section on Franklin Street was demolished and replaced by the present day Harper Building between 1977 and 1980. To many village residents, the loss of the George Potts house marked the end of a chapter in Waterdown's history.

In 1913 George Potts moved his blacksmith business from Clappison's Corners to the corner of Franklin and Dundas Streets. For over 50 years he provided his blacksmithing skills, shoeing horses, sharpening saws, repairing farm machinery and ironwork. Life was not all work for Mr. Potts, as during his lifetime he made over 100 violins, and on many summer evenings, he could be seen sitting by the pump beside his house amusing himself and others while playing on one of his instruments.

Vacant lot, Summer 1978

Following his death on March 9, 1967, his funeral was reported throughout Canada, partly because he was one of the last blacksmiths in Ontario and partly because his cortege was accompanied by a mounted escort of over 20 of his customers, a fitting tribute to a fine craftsman.

1993

East of Franklin Street

Many businesses have operated along this south side of the street. Among those remembered are: Ellis Gordon's Tailor Shop, Willis Fuels, Mid-Town Laundry a Real Estate Office and a Restaurant.

Wagenaum Cubs march pa[illegible] the George Potts House in the Annual Victoria Day Parade, 1956.

Looking east from Franklin Street c. 1965

The George Potts House and Blacksmith Shop.

993

Messecar Bros Garage, Dundas Street

In June 1938, Emory Messecar and his brother Howard purchased the L & H Garage that was located on the west corner of Franklin and Dundas Street from Harry Lillycrop and Bob Harvey. Advertising their business as "Another Progressive Waterdown Firm" the garage operated on this site for almost twenty years.

Messecar Bros. Garage, Dundas Street c.1938.

Although Howard Messecar returned to his work as an Accountant in 1940, the garage remained as Messecar Brothers for many years, as another brother who had been working in the gold mines at Schumacher retired and acted as night watchman for the business.

Until late in 1946 the garage remained open 24 hours a day and was reputedly the only garage on Highway #5 with a towing truck between St. George and Islington. Between 1938 and 1946, the garage would tow a car from the Waterdown area to Toronto for $5.00, even at night. During the 1950s Messecar's provided full service to the rapidly developing motor trade a line of pumps, the service of licensed mechanics that included Doug Lillycrop, Chester Lillycrop, Emil Baus and "Mickey" Shelton, a towing service and membership in the O.M.T.A. and O.A.A.

On April 1 1955 the garage moved to a new building further west on Dundas Street and continued under the Messecar name until Emory Messecar's death in 1969

North-West Main to Mill Street

The commercial section between the north-east corner and Chestnut Grove has been destroyed three times this century by the devastating fires of 1906, 1915 and 1922. Rebuilt following each fire, the block has been home to a wide variety of retail businesses. Some, such as Dale's, Alton's and Langford's have returned following the fires, but others are only fleetingly remembered just names in the village business listings.

Stories from the 1922 Fire abound, but those concerning the occupants of this block are especially touching since their misfortunes occurred solely from the inadequacies of the village fire department.

The Bell Telephone in Alf Dale's Store was operated by the Burns sisters. They remained at the switchboard for much of the afternoon while the fire raged around the building. Finally Miss Hazel Burns, the chief operator, fearing the building would catch fire at any moment, sent her younger sister out but heroically remained at her post until Hamilton linemen arrived to remove the switchboard as the building began to smoulder. Shortly after the ladies left the office was completely gutted.

The Embassy Restaurant - Country Cupboard Block 309-313 Dundas Street c.1980.

Mr. Alf Dale, owner of the store was advised soon after the blaze began to remove his brand new car from the front of Springer's Garage. Busy fighting the fire at the Royal Rink, he said that he did not think the fire would reach the garage since the village fire brigade was on the scene. Before he realized it, the fire spread across to Main Street South where his automobile was parked and it was destroyed.

1993

Village Fires

The first major fire of the twentieth century is poorly documented. Occurring in 1906, it broke out just east of the Main Street North intersection, destroying several businesses, but not the magnificent Crooker Building on the corner.

Less than a decade later on May 25, 1915, the Crooker Building was destroyed by another major fire. Reported in the Hamilton Herald, the fire which broke out early in the morning, levelled the entire block. Owned by Mr. Frederick Wesley Crooker. It was described by the newspaper as "the finest mercantile building in the village". Included in the building were the General Store operated by Postmaster Mr. W. Walley and on the second floor a large hall and public library.

So fierce were the flames, that the adjoining buildings were threatened. Neighbouring Alton's Barber Shop and Pool Room suffered damage when one of the walls collapsed. No one was injured, but several village fire fighters suffered cuts and bruises from the falling debris.

The volunteer village fire brigade although quickly on the scene were unable to cope with the blaze. The Hamilton Fire Department was called to assist, but arrived too late and only managed to prevent the fire from spreading. Ironically activities in the village on Victoria Day had been to raise funds for the village library.

Three years later on September 30, 1918, villagers awakened to another Dundas Street fire. The rear section of W. Cummins' Drugstore, the site of the blaze was destroyed, but many residents who rushed to assist, succeeded in the removal of the druggist's stock.

The village fire brigade managed to bring the fire under control, but the Waterdown Review still commented upon the disaster in the next edition of the paper stating, "this fire clearly demonstrates the fact that Waterdown is still in need of additional fire fighting apparatus, such as ladders, pike poles etc. Let us hope that the days of the frame fire trap are numbered, and that our Council will pass a By-Law which will prevent the building of this style of structure, which have caused our citizens a great deal of uneasiness in the past.

Just after 1pm on May 23, 1922 the last of the major fires to destroy sections of Dundas Street broke out. Eleven businesses, the Roller Rink and three private houses were destroyed by a fire that engulfed the south side of the street between Franklin and Main Street. When it was finally extinguished by the Hamilton Fire

The 1906 fire on Dundas Street destroyed a tailor shop and barber shop. Crooker's General Store was untouched.

Fire damage on Dundas Street looking west, May 25, 1915.

Department, the damage was estimated at between $60,000 and $80,000.

The fire, which at its height threatened to destroy the entire village core, began in the David Davies Cooperage and Heading Mill where a spark from the engine room ignited a pile of sawdust in the rear section. None of the employees saw the flames which, fanned by wind, quickly jumped to the rear of the Roller Rink. James Hayes, employed in the construction of the new Memorial Hall across the road, saw the flames leaping up the rear of the rink and immediately raced to the village bell to ring the alarm.

Within a few minutes, the volunteer fire brigade headed by George Cott arrived on the scene, equipped with only hand chemical engines to fight the flames which had completely enveloped the rear of the Roller Rink. They succeeded in removing the piano from the front section but little else. As other volunteers arrived, they removed stock from the nearby stores – Carroll's, Sterling Meat Company and Alton's Hardware. Among the volunteers was Mr. Bachelor, who ran from his store without even removing the cash from the till – his receipts went up in smoke, along with his drugstore and stock.

It soon became very apparent that the fire was almost completely out of hand as it quickly spread from store to store. Charles Burns, local agent for the Bell Telephone company requested his switchboard operator to contact the Hamilton Fire Department for help in the hope of saving the residential section of the village. The operator was told that such a request must be made by the Reeve of Waterdown to the Mayor of Hamilton. Fortunately another resident contacted Mr. J.F. Vance, the County Treasurer who had an office in the Old Courthouse and he gave the necessary guarantee to the Fire

Fire damage on Dundas Street looking north-east to Chestnut Grove, May 25, 1915

Fire damage along the north side of Dundas Street following the Great Fire, May 25, 1922

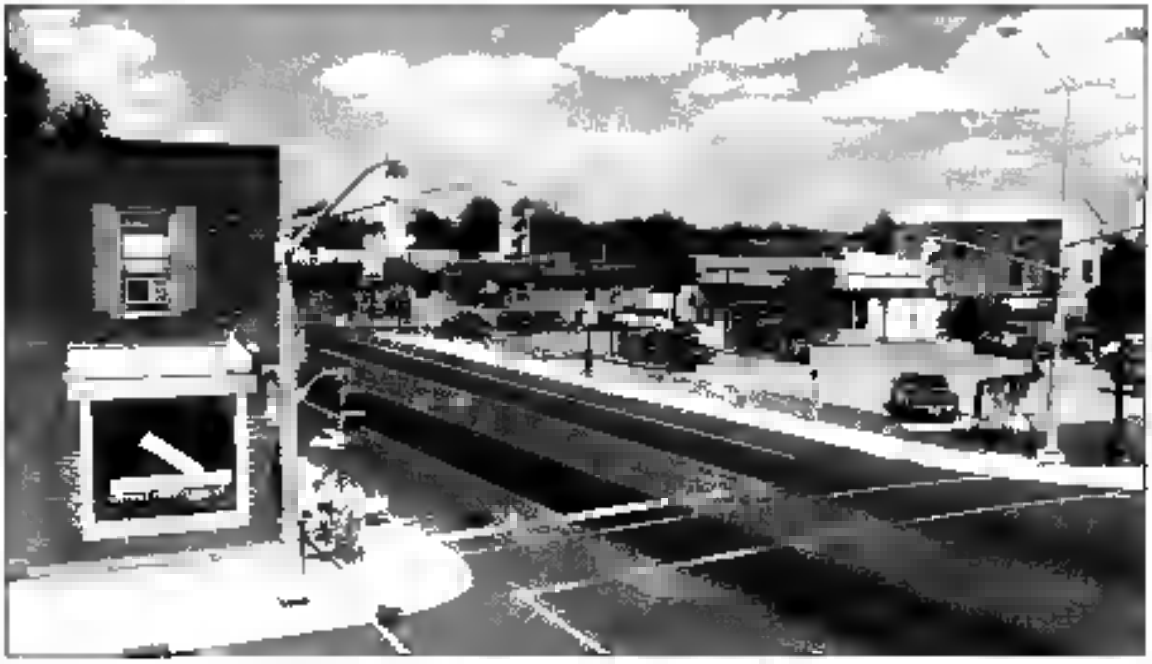
Chief who promptly dispatched an engine and group of fire fighters.

The costly switchboard was removed from the telephone office in an effort to save it, but this severed all phone communication with the outside. When the Hamilton fire engine arrived in the village and Deputy Chief Robert A Ishbister surveyed the scene, he quickly realized that there was no adequate supply of water to fight the fire. The dam on a small stream on Dr. McGregor's property was broken, and then blocked in the rear of the Kirk Hotel where the fire engine was parked. This immediately provided an adequate supply of water and with a slight change in wind direction, the fire was brought under control and extinguished by the early evening.

View from the roof of the Kirk Hotel, May 24 1922

Most of the buildings destroyed were of frame material, and these, with the oil and other inflammable materials in the garages, hardware and auto accessory businesses, made the blaze unusually hot and the smoke very dense. At one time the flames, shooting skywards, caused sparks to land on several residences to the north and west, including the home of Dr. McGregor. The Kirk Hotel roof caught fire several times, but the strong stream of water from the Hamilton engine prevented serious damage.

At the end of the day, much of the village core was damaged beyond repair, and the face of Waterdown changed forever.



1993

Dundas Street

Looking West from the Main Street Intersection

View looking west 1910.

Between 1875 and 1989 the Crooker corner block was operated by William Oscar Sealey the son of Watertown's first Reeve, Charles Sealey W.O. Sealey who operated a banking business on the premises and lived above the store was involved in one of the most exciting incidents to ever occur in the Village.

During the early hours of April 14, 1887 the building was broken into by burglars searching for the location of the downstairs bank safe. They drilled two holes near the handle of the safe, inserted powder, and ignited a fuse. The enormous explosion blew open the safe, shattered windows and awakened the Sealeys who were in bed overhead. Mr. Sealey seized his revolver and blasted away from the head of the stairway hoping to scare away the intruders. The burglars returned the fire and four bullets pierced the bedroom floor. Several more volleys of gunfire occured before W.O. Sealey attempted to open a side window, and call for help. Gunfire from the street struck the sash, but missed Mr. Sealey. Realizing that the disturbance would soon bring attention, the burglars began to beat a retreat: two running northwards, and two to the south across the Dundas Street intersection. The two who ran north carried the drawers from the safe, full of valuable papers, eventually throwing them down under the Dundas Street bridge where they were found later that morning.

1993

The North-East Corner of Dundas and Main Street Intersection

Looking East Towards Vinegar Hill

The north-east corner of Main and Dundas Street has been "home" to many long time family businesses that have been an important part of village history.

The Crooker family appear to have operated commercial establishments in Watertown from an early date. In 1853 Francis Crooker appears on a list of trades and businesses in the village as a grocer and baker. In the listing for 1857-58, his name appears as dealer in dry goods, hardware and groceries. It is not known if this corner was the location of the store, but Crookers appear continuously in the Directory Listings of the village from this date onwards as merchants, general store owners and druggists.

Frederick William Crooker built the very fine brick building that bore the Crooker name and graced this corner from the turn of the century. The building survived the 1906 village fire, but was badly damaged during the second in 1915.

The corner was rebuilt by Mr. Crooker, and for a short period he continued in business, serving as Postmaster until 1927. However his interest quickly began local politics and he served as Reeve of Watertown from 1924 until his death in 1927.

The Dale family became owners of the corner block after the 1915 fire living in the house behind the store. They too operated a business, selling groceries and meats, and providing a delivery service throughout the village. Rebuilding the store after the Great Fire of 1922 they only stayed for another year before selling the corner building to W.E."Will" Langford.

Mr. Langford had come to Watertown after graduating from the Ontario College of Pharmacy in 1921 and set up his own business in one half of the Alton Grocery Store. After this building was destroyed in 1922, he moved two doors down the street into the rebuilt Dale's store.

Langford's Pharmacy continued at this location for 64 years, and like the Weeks building at Mill and Dundas, could be called one of the village landmarks. Remembered for its virtually unchanged store front, soda fountain and friendly staff the drug store closed its doors on May 31 1986 and moved into the new Watertown Plaza.

F.W. Crooker's General Store north-east corner c. 913

Alf Dale's General Store north-east corner c.19 R-1920

Hazel and Myrtle Dale outside their father's General Store 1921

Alf Dale's General Store north-east corner c.1920

Wilfred Langford's Drug Store c.1930

1993

Dundas and Main Street Intersection

Looking Northwards

Crooker General Store c.1895

Kirk Hotel and Crooker's General Store 1900

John Prudham's Delivery Service outside the Kirk Hotel c.1906. Horse drawn sleighs and wagons await the arrival of mail and parcels at Mr. Crooker's General Store opposite.

1993

South-East Corner of Dundas and Main Street

The majority of the buildings along this south side of Dundas Street, which were largely constructed of wood, remained virtually unchanged until the Great Fire of 1922. The south-east corner has been the site of commercial establishments throughout the history of the village. Orley B. Griffin's General Store was one of the few village businesses to retain a covered walkway into the twentieth century. However, the 1922 fire destroyed both Mr. Griffin's General Store and residence – this corner suffering complete devastation.

Looking east from the Dundas and Main Street intersection, 1905.

In January 1930, Harry Lillycrop and Bob Harvey opened a garage business on Dundas Street known as the L. & H. Garage. Originally located in George Potts' Blacksmith shop on the east side of Franklin Street for a year, while Mr. Potts contemplated retirement in his northern cottage, the two mechanics moved into Allan's Garage on the corner of Franklin and Dundas Street, when he decided to "unretire". During its years of operation, the L. & H. Garage complex included a set of pumps, towing and repair service and an independent diner.

Interior of Orley B. Griffin's General Store, '92

[illegible] owned by Harry Fillyerup and Bob Harvey, south-west corner of Dundas Street and Frankl n Street c 1933.

1993

North-West Corner of Main and Dundas Street

Hotels have from an important part of Waterdown's history from its earliest days. As the village prospered, the number of hotels dramatically increased, and as it declined, so did the hotels.

The Kirk Hotel situated on the north-west corner of Dundas Street and Main Street North is the village's second prominent hotel. It has been a popular "watering hole" for locals since the last decade of the nineteenth century. Unlike the American Hotel, it has undergone very little change since its early days, and still retains many of its original exterior features, a reflection of stable family ownership that operated the establishment for almost a century.

The property was originally granted to Alexander McDonnell and then passed through the ownership of Alexander Brown and E.C. Griffin. In 1862, this north west corner was purchased by Thomas English, a prominent local inhabitant, a carriage manufacturer and donor of the property on which the original St. Thomas Roman Catholic Church was built. This corner was the location of his carriage works, but in 1868, the property was sold to William Heisse. In the same year, Heisse was recorded as a Hotel Keeper although no name for the establishment was given until 1875 when he was listed as the Proprietor of the Right House Hotel.

In 1898 Patrick Kirk purchased the property and it remained in his family's possession until 1966, passing through three generations of the Kirk family. Soon after the family assumed ownership they converted the frame hotel to a brick building. Patrick Kirk added a kitchen and pantry at the rear and four rooms to the front of the building. This enlargement of the original hotel building being necessary to serve the increasing village traffic, as the Kirk was a stop on three different stage coach routes that passed through Waterdown.

At this time the hotel grounds extended to just beyond the present village Post Office, but the wooden stables and large barn that fronted onto Main Street and appear on several turn of the century postcards have been demolished. Many village residents still recall the

The Kirk Hotel 1920.

1993

open area north of the hotel, with trees, a small rustic bridge and stream that until the 1950s, ran south from the McGregor estate on Main Street and meandered across the Kirk property before disappearing under the hotel building. Water from this stream was reputedly used to help douse the Great Fire of 1922. Sadly the stream has been led into a drain and the trees removed to make way for the present parking lot.

When Patrick Kirk died in 1897 his son John Henry Kirk and his wife Annie Isabella Organ took over the operation of the hotel. During these early years, the hotel was one of the sites of John Pridham's annual winter banquets – this was the time when whisky cost 3 cents a glass, and to reserve a hotel room cost $1.50 a day.

After the Great Fire of 1922, the Bell Telephone company was installed in the hotel and remained there until 1931. John Henry Kirk died in 1941 and for three years his son John Leo Kirk operated the hotel before his ill health forced his sister Mary to take on the responsibilities. She continued the family ownership until 1966 when it was sold out of the Kirk family. In 1990 the Morgunov family of Toronto took possession and undertook the task of a major facelift to a building that has been an important village landmark throughout its existence.

Dundas Street

Looking East Towards the Village Core

The large two storey stone house that stood on the south-west corner of Main and Dundas Streets was demolished in 1962 prior to the erection of the Royal Bank building in the following year. Village residents recall several notable families occupying the house, including the Spences, Carsons, Johnsons, and Attridges.

Looking east from Hamilton Street 1909

Looking east from the Royal Bank, Main and Dundas Street, Spring 1967

393

Residential Section

Dundas Street

Looking East from Hamilton Street

Sidewalks were still made from boards during the first decade of the twentieth century. Slightly contoured to allow for drainage, the road was dusty in the summer, and bumpy and full of pot holes as the frost came out each spring. Maintenance with horse teams operated by Jack Buchanan, Davy Davies, and the Sisters continued all summer. Using wagon boxes filled with stones that were dumped onto the highway, and then crushed by steam rollers, it was backbreaking labour. During very dry periods, the road surface was oiled or dampened down to improve visibility.

Gas lighting was in place at the turn of the century with standards located at the Mill and Main Street intersections. Electricity came to Waterdown when Sir Adam Beck addressed a mass meeting in the Roller Rink, and officially turned on the hydro September 1911.

View [illegible] for [illegible] 909 Bill Crocker's Variety Store on the north-east corner of Dundas and Main Street, Cummins' Drug Store and the Bell House-Tower.

1993

The Crooker House, 299 Dundas Street

Built in 1864 for successful Watertown merchant and druggist William H. Crooker, descendent of an early Flamborough family, this large Victorian mansion is surrounded by attractive grounds. Ownership of the property passed to W.H. Crooker's son at the turn of the century. Frederick W. Crooker also assumed operation of his father's general store at the corner of Main and Dundas Street until it was destroyed by fire in 1915. He served as Watertown's Postmaster 1906-1927 and as Reeve of the village from 1924 until his death in 1927. He was a popular, hard working politician, and through his efforts, the waterworks system in Waterdown was installed by Fred Carson & Sons.

During the 1940's and 1950's the house was the residence and office of Dr. Reginald Perkins from Hamilton. Lovingly restored to its Victorian splendour by the present owner, the house is now a commercial establishment known as "The Parlour."

Side view of the Crooker House, 1920

Crooker House from Dundas Street c. 1977

1993

This small one-and-a-half storey house in the residential section of Dundas Street appears to have been painted white for much of its life. Constructed of stone blocks over which stucco and paint have been applied, its style is that of a typical Ontario house of the 1860-1875 period with upper windows in the gable ends and a central gable above the front entrance.

From time to time commercial businesses have been located in the lower section of the building, with the upper floor serving as a residence. Village residents recall a seamstress and two elderly bachelor brothers living in the house in the late 1930s.

The White House, 297 Dundas Street, 1977

1993

Methodist New Connexion Church – Maycock House

In 1859 one-fifth of an acre of land on the corner of Dundas and Flamboro Street was bought from Russell Smith and James K. Griffin by the Trustees of the Canadian Wesleyan Methodist New Connexion congregation "for the purpose of building a village church.

A modest stone church was built on the site and opened within a year, but its time as a place of worship was very brief as fifteen years later, the two local Methodist churches united the congregation from this church moving to worship on Mill Street North. No longer required for regular Sunday services, the building became the Sunday School for the two churches between 1874 and 1882.

298 Dundas Street c.1967

Mrs. Deborah Jarvis sister of Wilmot Eaves, Charles Sealey purchased the building in 1882, and was responsible for its conversion to a private residence No photographs from the era when it was a church have ever been found, so the original appearance is not known. Some changes can be detected when the exterior is examined, these include the position of the front door bricked windows and the addition of a second storey.

The house was converted to apartments during the 1960s, and the Wentworth County Health unit opened offices there and paved over the side yard for parking In 1969 Professor Paul Maycock undertook restoration of the building and property including the installation of the white picket fence, and small garden filled with many fine examples of unusual Canadian perennials.

1993

Hamilton to Main Street

An ornate and unusual two storey Victorian house marks the end of the residential section on the north side of Dundas Street. This building is one of a diminishing number of private residences along the street, as many of the larger ones have become commercial establishments in the last two decades.

The house has been the home of two well-known Waterdown residents. During the first half of the century it was owned by Richard "Dick" Smith who served as Reeve of Waterdown for two terms, 1920-1924 and 1932-1943. During his first term of office, the terrible fire of 1922 that destroyed much of the village core occurred. While praising the members of the Hamilton Fire Department who, by their indefatigable efforts saved the village core from further destruction, he vowed to ensure that an adequate water supply and fire fighting equipment be put in place. Neither proposal was enacted during his first term, but his suggestion that only fire-proof buildings be erected in the centre of the village was successful.

The Smith - Carson House, 289 Dundas Street

During the 1950s, the property was purchased by Cliff Carson, a son and member of the famous Waterdown company Fred Carson & Sons responsible for many major construction and highway projects in the province, including the village waterworks and the paving of the Mount Hope airstrip.

993

"Maple Lawn", 292 Dundas Street

Located in the centre of the residential section of Dundas Street, "Maple Lawn" is a large attractive two storey house that dates from the late 1880-1890 period, reputedly designed by Mr. Souter, a local architect. Constructed of red stretcher bond brick, it has been painted white at some point during its history. Several fine features, including a wide front verandah, decorative bargeboard and round-headed windows on the second floor, high in each of the gables that face Dundas Street make this dwelling one of the finest in the area.

At the rear is a large brick carriage house and loft, and reputedly there is a spring well on the east side of the property. Mr. George Allison, who described himself as a "gentleman" on the 1898 Waterdown Voter's List was probably the builder of this Victorian mansion. He was a local magistrate and an avid collector of Indian relics many from the Lake Medad area were eventually donated as a collection to the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

Mr. Harold Greene the first publisher of the Waterdown Review lived in the house for a brief period, and it is believed that a few of the early papers were produced in the carriage house. During the Depression years the house was converted to a Tourist Home and several out-of-town school teachers boarded there while employed at the High School.

Maple Lawn, Summer 1977

Maple Lawn, Summer 1990

993

North-East Corner of Dundas and Hamilton Street

The commercial block occupying the north-east corner of Hamilton and Dundas Street included this white stucco house until the 1980s. A variety of businesses have operated from this building alone. During the 1930s and 1940s, a restaurant and garage owned by the Brown family, was a favourite "haunt" for Senior Waterdown High School students.

Before the house was demolished to make way for a proposed Car Wash, it served as the headquarters of Mrs. Betty Ward's campaign for Mayor of Flamborough in the November 1978 Municipal Election.

Mrs. Betty Ward's Campaign Headquarters, north-east corner of Dundas and Hamilton Street, c.1978.

1993

North-West Corner of Dundas and Hamilton Street

Hamilton Street marks the western entrance to the Village of Watertown. The Metcalfe farm bordering on Hamilton and Dundas Streets was a Market Gardening operation that also included small fruits such as black currants. Commercial strip development in the 1950s heralded the end of farming.

In 1953, a Sunoco Service Station opened, operated by Jack Hodgins, with "Bob" Williamson and Bill Hunter providing repairs to cars and trucks. The property behind gradually reverted to low growing bush until 1987 when the Rosart Brothers began the development of the Watertown Plaza which by 1993 included such businesses as I.G.A. Langford's I.D.A. Chapters, and the Toronto Dominion Bank.

Ruby Featherston, Ruth Bell and Bernice Lemon, Metcalfe Farm, Hamilton Street, 1938

The Waterdown High School, Dundas Street

In January 1928, students from the upper floor of Mary Hopkins School on Mill Street North in Waterdown walked over to the new high school that had been constructed on the south-west corner of Hamilton and Dundas Street at the western entrance to the village. The largest gathering in the history of Waterdown, nearly 800 people, assembled on February 27, 1928 to watch the opening ceremonies. Built of red brick, in the Art-Deco style, at a cost of $60,000, with an additional $10,000 for the grounds and equipment, the new school was surrounded by controversy during the early months. The East Flamborough Township Council felt strongly that since the township had contributed 60% of the cost, the words, "East Flamborough" should be part of the school's name.

However, at the official opening by Dr. F.W. Merchant, Provincial Director of Education, the name, Waterdown High School, that dated from the school's beginnings in 1853, was given. Later in the same year, the School Board relented, and the name was changed to include the words East Flamborough. The name eventually became Waterdown District High School. Consisting of eight classrooms, a Gymnasium and Assembly Hall for the 250 pupils, it was described as a "progressive enterprise". While the original building had been designed to serve the needs of the community, the growth of Waterdown and changes in education during the 1950s necessitated expansion with the construction of additions to the main building in 1954, 1956 and 1967-68.

When the first request for expansion, more classrooms for the teaching of practical subjects, was made to town council in 1952 by Principal F.W. Walden, supported by Deputy William Tyrell, the claim "our young people must be sent into life equipped to the best of their ability and we must raise our sights above cost and think of what is going to be best for future generations" was made. A claim that was made again almost four decades later and resulted in a new Waterdown District High School being built on Parkside Drive in 1992.

Waterdown, as East Flamborough High School, 1928.

Waterdown District High School, 1958

1993

Looking at the intersection of Main and Duncan Street, c 1906–1910.

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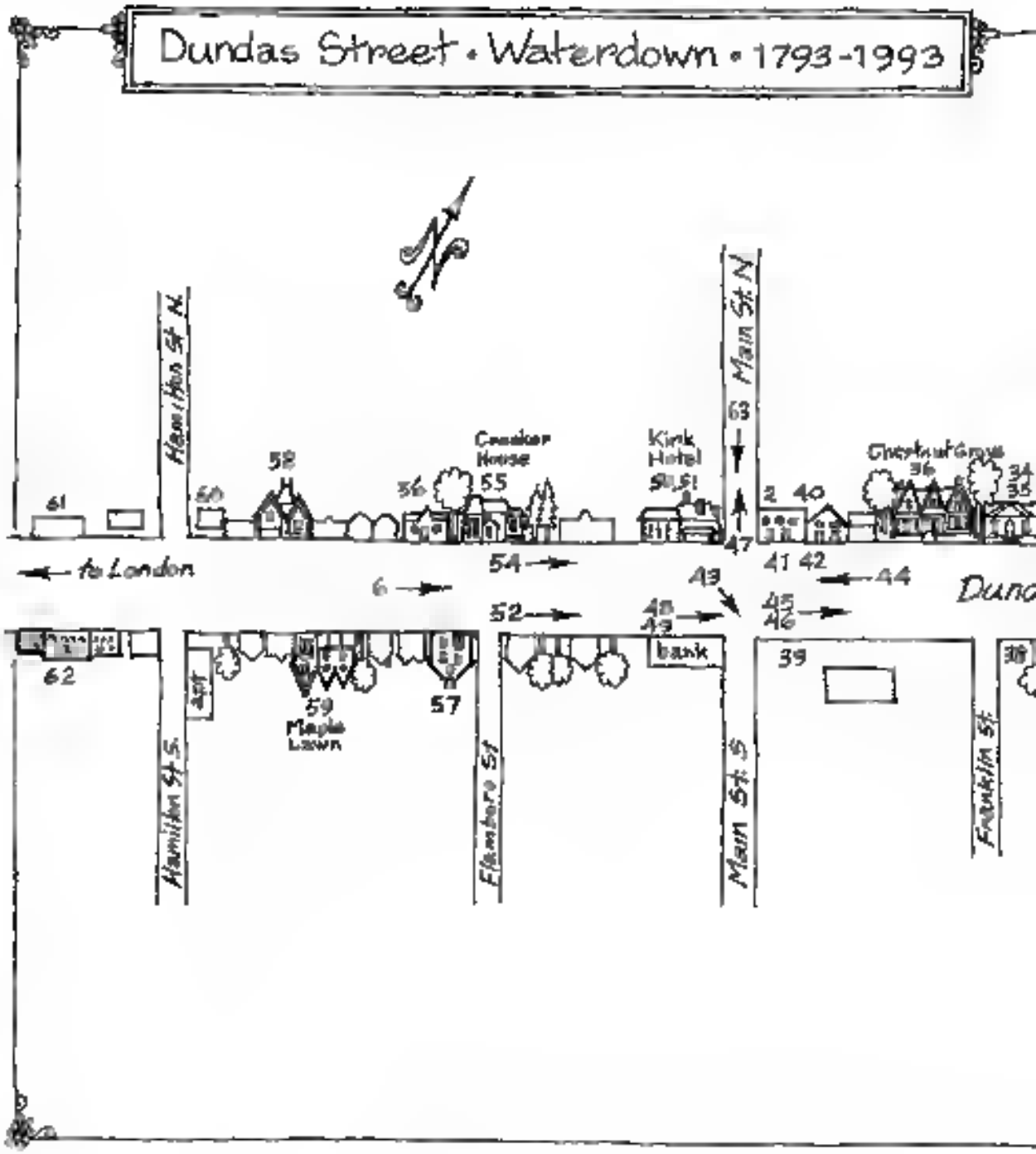
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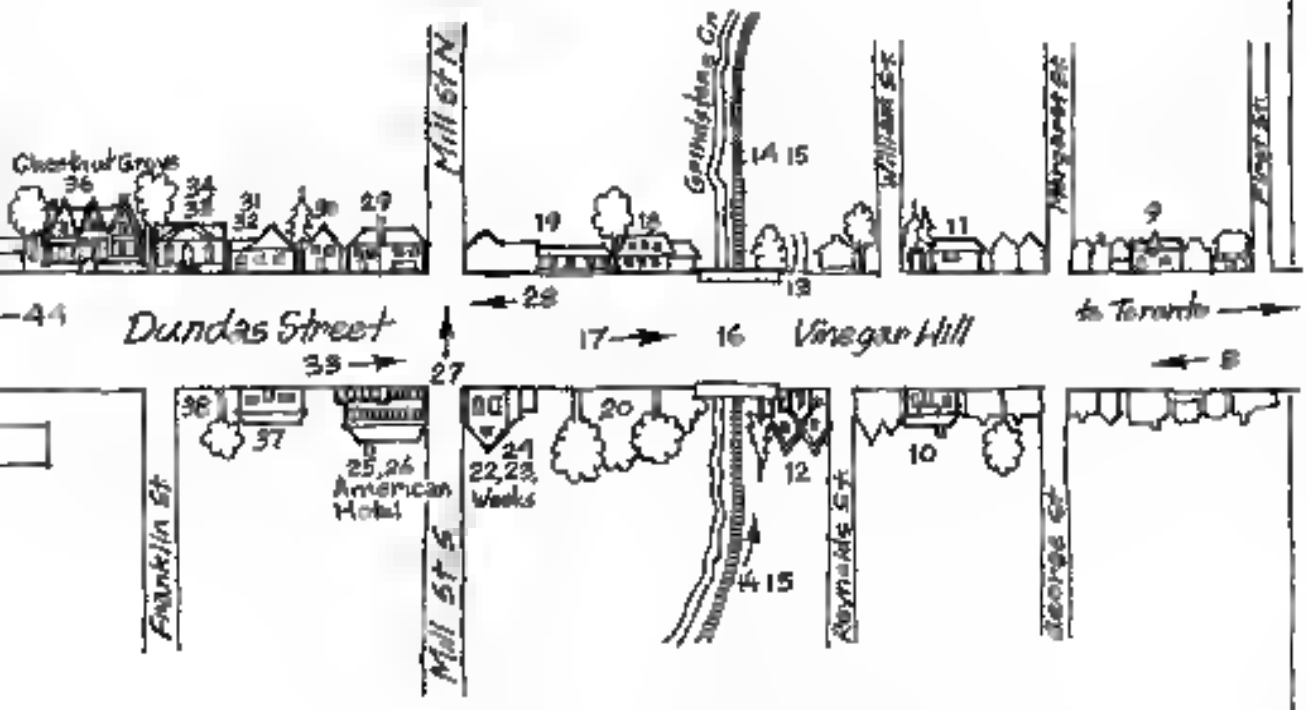

- Numbers refer to page numbers
- → Arrows indicate direction of view
- Map not to scale

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DUNDAS STREET
Waterdown

1793-1993

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The Waterdown-East Flamborough
Heritage Society

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Dundas Street

During the Summer months of 1992 and 1993, with the reconstruction of Highway #5 or Dundas Street, the core of the Village of Waterdown was a permanent scene of potholes construction equipment and very unhappy motorists Few people who travelled along this much-used road were aware that this is almost certainly the oldest highway in the Province of Ontario In 1993, this historic routeway celebrated the Bicentennial of its opening

Dedicated to the memory of
Mrs Ellene Barbara Kennedy,
one of the founding members of
The Waterdown-East Flamborough
Heritage Society who worked
tirelessly to preserve the
Heritage of the Village of Waterdown

Foreword

In 1993, The Waterdown East Flamborough Heritage Society proudly celebrated its 20th Anniversary as a community organization in the Town of Flamborough. Founded to ensure that the local history of the two original communities would not be lost with their elimination through the move to Regional Government on January 1, 1974, the Society has grown from a group of dedicated local citizens who met to form the organization, to one that now receives support from members across Canada and the U.S.A.

The Society's Anniversary coincided with two other events, the provincial celebrations of the 200th Anniversary of the opening of the first section of Dundas Street in October 1793 and the completion of the reconstruction and upgrading of Highway #5 (Dundas Street) through the Village of Waterdown. To commemorate all three occasions, the idea of an exhibition of past and present photographs depicting Dundas Street, Waterdown was proposed.

Mrs. Marike Scholtens, Mr. Maurice Green and Mr. Robert Wray, three Society Directors accepted the responsibility for the planning of an exhibition to be entitled, "Present Images of Dundas Street Past 1793-1993". Streetscapes, buildings and businesses along Dundas Street were photographed throughout the Spring and Summer of 1993 by Mr. Maurice Green.

Two local high school students were hired to assist with all the preliminary work necessary to mount the Exhibition. Tim Wray, attending Guido de Bres High School, Hamilton was given the responsibility of locating historical photographs of buildings, businesses and events along the road. Lori Dodman, a graduate of Waterdown District High School was hired to research the history behind the chosen photographs. Many long time residents of the village spent an afternoon reminiscing about this section of Dundas Street and Society members and friends loaned additional photographs that were copied for the exhibition.

At the end of the Summer, the photographs and text were compiled by Mr. Green and the Society's Archivist, Sylvia Wray, and arranged into a set of forty plates for a display that would allow visitors to take a stroll along historic Dundas Street. To enhance the exhibition, local artist, Mrs. Patricia Green designed a map identifying the various buildings and sites that were on display.

On Thursday, October 29, 1993, Mr. Peter Vance, the Society's first President, officially opened the three day Exhibition at Grace Anglican Church Parish Hall on Mill Street North. To the delight of the Society's Board of Directors, the Exhibition was an overwhelming success, with many people returning for a second visit. The Guest Book recorded visitors from throughout the Hamilton, Burlington and Golden Horseshoe area, reflecting the interest of people in such a unique project. As a result of the numerous comments about the value of such an exhibition to the community's history, the Society decided that the photographs should become a permanent record of the history of Dundas Street, Waterdown.

Retaining the same format of historical photographs matched with present day ones and accompanied by a brief text, Mr. Green and Mrs. Wray undertook the task of transforming the exhibition plates into a book during the summer of 1994.

With the completion of this project, it is the Society's hope that this record of Waterdown's main thoroughfare, Dundas Street, will be enjoyed by young and old, resident and visitor, and that the stories long associated with it will never be forgotten.

Crooke's store, c 1895

Dundas Street

York October 1793 "Captain Smith is returned from cutting the road named Dundas It is opened for 20 miles. They met with quantities of wild grapes and put some of the juice in barrels to make vinegar and Captain Smith told me it turned out very tolerable wine"

In those few lines from her highly informative and often witty diary Mrs. John Graves Simcoe wife of Upper Canada s first Lieutenant Governor, records the beginnings of this famous old Ontario road

Although John Graves Simcoe is credited with the original idea of constructing this early highway the first proposal actually came from his father. Prior to his appointment by the British government, Simcoe had served in the American Revolutionary War and while there his father had collected old French maps. Among those which he obtained, one showed a fur trading route from the vicinity of present day Dundas to the upper waters of the Thames River

On his arrival in Upper Canada in 1792, Simcoe's primary task was to initiate and supervise settlement He was also given the responsibility of formulating plans to deal with the overwhelming fear of invasion from the recently liberated American colonies His father presented him with the suggestion that a waterway dug along the fur trader s route would provide an inland passage well back from the border and relatively safe from a surprise attack.

After studying the suggestion and with the expectation of imminent border attacks John Graves Simcoe and a military party travelled through the western part of the province from Niagara to the border at Windsor during the winter of 1793 Guided by indians and following their trails by foot and sleigh where possible Simcoe came to the conclusion that a road would be superior since it would be multi-purpose serving as a military link between Lakes Ontario Erie St. Clair and Huron, and as a spur to settlement Simcoe also reasoned that the American control of shipping on the Great Lakes was certain for several years and therefore an inland route was the only way to ensure the safe movement of troops and supplies

The decision to relocate the capital of the province from Newark, to a site on the Thames River where London stands today initiated the start of the highway Simcoe believed that this new inland capital was a safer location and could be linked to Lake Ontario by the highway he planned, the road running from the Thames to Burlington Bay From here there would be a link with the network of trails going eastwards to York and onto Kingston and with a north-south route joining York with Lake Simcoe

With his surveyor Augustus Jones, and accompanied by a guide Jean Baptiste Rousseau, Lt Governor John Graves Simcoe selected the exact spot where the work would begin They entered Burlington Bay from the lake and proceeded through the marsh at the eastern end, choosing a site that was a known Indian landing place. Jones began his survey immediately using a line marked at an angle of 70 degrees west that ran from Coote's Paradise to the upper forks of the Thames River a distance of eighty miles

Work on this first or western section of the route that today is often referred to as "The Governor's Road" went as far as the Mohawk Village on the Grand River where Joseph Brant was chief The actual road cutting under the direction of a Captain Smith and a company of men of the Queen's Rangers was completed in less thet a month But opening a road in 1793 involved nothing more than clearing a corridor through the bush leaving the bigger stumps to rot and often going around very large groups of trees.

York: September 23 1793 "Captain Smith has gone to open a road to be called Dundas Street, from the head of the Lake to River La Tranche. He has 100 men with him — I hear that they kill

rattlesnakes everyday yet not a man has been bitten ... Captain Smith sent two of the snakes in a barrel that I might see them, they were dark and ugly and make a whizzing sound in shaking their rattles when I touched them with a stick"

The second section of the highway begun in the spring of 1794 went as far as the site of the planned new capital, London. However the departure of Lt. Governor Simcoe from Canada before the road had actually reached the site and his decision to designate York (Toronto) the official capital caused work to almost cease completely Within months this primitive single-lane pathway began to grow over again and revert to forest only Simcoe's foresight saved the road from oblivion.

Immediately work on the trail from Dundas had begun Governor Simcoe authorized that grants of land along its route be made to the military personnel who had opened it. Although many of these grants were not taken up as farms, enough traffic was generated to make it worthwhile for the new owners to accept the responsibility of keeping their portiou of the road open Acceptance of such a land grant required that the pioneer keep his frontage clear For the new settler, the road was his lifeline of transport and to Governor Simcoe it ensured the viability of his road. Even though it remained as little more than a primitive path with mud holes that as one early humorist wrote "stretched from one spot to the next" it ensured that the settlement of Upper Canada would come

Stretching from Burlington Bay to York, the second and eastward section of the highway that bore the name Dundas Highway after Henry Dundas who was Home Secretary and responsible for Colonial Affairs was not begun until a decade later

Since water transportation along the north shore of Lake Ontario was good there was not the urgency to build the eastern section of the road that Simcoe considered to be so important In 1805 the great block of land that lay beyond the eastern boundary of East Flamborough Township was finally purchased from the Mississauga Indians. This tract or hunting ground was the entire area between Burlington Bay and the Humber River Simcoe honoured the Mississauga's land rights and although settlers had to cross the Indian's territory more and more frequently as the old capital of Newark was transferred to York the Lt Governor refused to force the Mississaugas to give up their land. Finally in 1806 an agreement was reached and the government took possession of the land, the Indians gradually dispersing to the Grand River and Montreal area

In the same year Nelson Township was opened to settlers. Onto the newly surveyed land families with names such as Bastedo, Hopkins, Markle, Calvert Zimmerman Bennett Rose King and Chisholm soon settled Several of these people were already on the land or had requested the location prior to the official opening With the arrival of the settlers the opening of a road to the east and the capital of York began

The road was surveyed and constructed several miles back from the lakeshore to avoid the difficulty of bridging the wide mouths of the many creeks and streams that crossed the area and for greater safety in transporting troops and supplies in time of war Much of the construction work on this eastern section of Dundas Street was under the direction of an American road builder called Asa Danforth at a cost of $90 a mile

Since this construction work involved nothing more than clearing a corridor through the bush, leaving the bigger stumps to rot and little else, the complaint by Danforth later that he lost money on the contract seems difficult to believe!

After serving several generations of settlers and changing from a footpath to a single-lane track that could accommodate wagons and carts to the present day thoroughfare through Etobicoke and Mississauga this highway has been the scene of tremendous change during its two hundred years Hundreds of stories and incidents are associated with it, but so many of them are now forgotten by the passage of time

The histonc village of Waterdown, that Dundas Street passes through on its way westwards towards London, is full of such stories and incidents Built upon land that was originally granted to Lt. Alexander McDonnell in 1796, the area remained undeveloped until 1805 when the second phase of the Dundas Street construction commenced

Alexander Brown, an agent of the North West Company purchased property from McDonnell in 1805 and within a year built a sawmill at the falls on Grindstone Creek. The enterprises of Brown, and later Ebenezer Griffin during the 1820s and 1830s accounted for substantial industrial growth in the creek valley

The first Common School was built in 1826 on the south-west corner of Flamboro and Dundas Street Mill Street South and Franklin Street were the only north-south roads opened to the south of Dundas Street by the 1830s providing access to milling sites just above the Great Falls and along the Grindstone Creek. On the east bank of the Grindstone only Board Street ran north off Dundas along the river bank and Spring Street ran south

In 1831 Ebenezer Griffin prepared a village plan for Waterdown, and during the next decade sold a number of village lots, primarily west of Mill Street along Dundas Street With his brother and business partner, Absalom, he continued to add to his industrial holdings with the construction of another sawmill and a carding mill. Soon other pioneer settlers were attracted to the potential power of the Grindstone and purchased lots, several of them with water privileges Names such as Hawke Graham and Cummins accelerated the industrial development of the creek. This area later to become known as Smokey Hollow was fuelled by dams and raceways, and was the site of saw grist and flour mills a woollen mill, brass foundry tanneries rake snath cradle and basket factories.

By the date of the first Village Assessment in 1841 the village population totalled 165 people many of them engaged in milling and the commercial establishments that had begun to develop along the narrow Dundas Highway which was the only access to the interior of the area and the principal east west route between Toronto and Dundas.

In 1878 Waterdown was incorporated as a village The last years of the nineteenth century were ones of general population decline. A series of fires, floods and dwindling water power in the Grindstone Creek heralded the end of Waterdown's milling industries. Early in the twentieth century several major fires destroyed many of the older commercial structures along Dundas Street dramatically changing the face of the Village of Waterdown.

Looking east towards the village core and Vinegar Hill c.1900.

Vinegar Hill Section

Vinegar Hill

The eastern entrance to Waterdown descends gently through tree-lined Vinegar Hill, the oldest section of this historic village.

The name appears to have been in use from earliest times, and may have been given because of the many market gardens with apple orchards that lined the hill. Much of this apple crop was required for the production of cider which was made from late summer onwards using the windfalls and bruised fruit. With no modern refrigration available for the storage of the cider it had a very short life before fermentation began to change the cider to vinegar. By the early Fall, the smell of fermenting apples was almost certainly noticeable to residents and visitors as they entered the village and may explain the origin of the name.

Settlement along Dundas Street had begun by the time Ebenezer Culver Griffin prepared a village plan for Waterdown in 1831. By 1841 there were approximately 48 households listed on the Assessment Rolls for Waterdown. Most of these houses were located on the east bank of the Grindstone Creek in the Vinegar Hill area and consisted of one storey log or frame cottages facing onto Dundas Street.

Between 1831 and 1850 a small burying ground for the village was opened on Vinegar Hill. Through donations of land from George Bush to the Reverend David Culp and Trustees of the Waterdown Chapel of the Methodist Episcopal Church and Absalom Griffin to the Trustees of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the Union Cemetery was established. Within the grounds of this peaceful cemetery dozens of stones to pioneer settlers with names such as Baker, Griffin, Smoke, Culp and Brown are to be found recording the hardships of the early years.

Looking down Vinegar Hill 1907

Vinegar Hill from First Street

1993

Kirby House

Originally part of a two hundred acre Crown Grant to Ebenezer Culver Griffin in 1837, this house on the north side of Vinegar Hill is one of the oldest in the village. Between 1839 and 1855 ownership of the property is unclear. This is probably the time period during which the rear section, which is the oldest part of the house was constructed. Land Registry documents and entries on the Assessment Rolls suggest William Lang or George Bush as the first owners. George Will and his wife Hannah, a member of the Horning family were owners from 1855 to 1863.

Kirby House 357 Dundas Street, Summer 1977

The rear section of the dwelling built of coarse or rubble stone dates from the 1839-1855 period, while the front one-and-a half storey board and batten section dates from a later period, c 1860-1870. One of the most interesting features of the house, clearly visible from Dundas Street is the wooden verandah with ornate brackets on the pillars of the board and batten section.

Like many houses on this side of Vinegar Hill the rear property was used for Market Gardening during the first half of this century. There were large greenhouses in the backyard of this house until the late 1960s — possibly remnants from the time when James H. Balfour, a Waterdown Market Gardener, owned the property.

1993

Raycroft Cottage

This charming single storey cottage on Vinegar Hill dates from the 1880-1870 period, and is one of several similar cottages to be found in the village. Built close to the street, its simple design is in sharp contrast to the larger and more ornate houses to the west. Constructed of clapboard, overlaid with white board and batten, and with a low hip roof, the dwelling sits on a stone foundation with 18 inch thick walls.

Several well known Waterdown names appear in the Registry Book as owners of the property Featherston (1880-1920) Vance (1930s) Shutt (1940s) and Hamilton (1950s)

Reverend George Richardson, a Methodist minister serving Waterdown and the surrounding area is among the earliest documented owners of the house. Reputedly Mrs. Richardson's sister lived with them during the time they were stationed in Waterdown and the two ladies were renowned as avid horse racing fans

The Raycroft Cottage, 348 Dundas Street, Summer 1979

1993

Pillé House

In 1977 Mr "Mickey" Rocket, a longtime village resident recalled that this home was originally a one storey log cottage Unfortunately the building has been altered several times, even the rubble lower storey and board and batten upper level have been covered since the William Reid photograph recorded its appearance c 1910

The house was formerly entered from Dundas Street but, possibly to ease traffic flow along Vinegar Hill, it is now accessed off William Street.

The Pillé House, 343 Dundas Street, c 1910

1993

Eager House

One of the fine Victorian residences in the village, this house was built for the Eager family c.1875 and remained in their ownership for three generations virtually unaltered.

The patriarch of the family Benjamin Eager emigrated from Ireland in 1837 settling in Lowville with his son Joseph a merchant. Joseph, with his family came to Waterdown and was the builder of this house. In 1873 with his two sons James and Joseph Jr. he purchased Griffin's General Store at the south east corner of Mill and Dundas Street. They continued to operate it until 1924 with a variety of merchandise which included groceries, dry goods, boots, shoes, hardware and wallpaper.

Eager House, 340 Dundas Street, Summer 1977

The house is constructed of cut stone with a rough cast and lime cement facing that was added around the turn of the century. Over the years, the facing has been painted a variety of colours. The most noticeable features of the house are the unusual portico with intricate woodwork of a sun motif flanked by fans, and the beautifully carved bargeboard of the gables.

1993

Board Street and the Dundas Street Bridge

Located at the foot of Vinegar Hill Board Street descended steeply to the Grindstone Creek, the Vance House and by travelling along the banks of the creek, to Will Reid's barn.

This area, between Reid's Dam just upstream, and the bridge was the site of several small mills between 1835 and 1911 although today no evidence remains. A turning mill that belonged to the Reid family was virtually destroyed by the demands of the railway as it moved into the Grindstone Creek valley and it ended its life as a large barn. Fondly remembered as a favourite playground for the children of the Vinegar Hill area the old wooden mill turned-barn housed a wonderful collection of fancy pigeons the property of Will Reid the renowned Waterdown photographer of the early twentieth century who captured so much of the village's history with his camera.

View across the valley. The Waterdown Evaporator and Jam Factory and Slater's Saw Mill line the edge of the creek c.1900.

Before the railway came to Waterdown, the Reid and Slater Mills had faced each other across the Grindstone Creek. It appears from reminiscences of some villagers that the two owners were not always on good terms. It is recalled that Henry Slater often shouted across the creek at John Reid, Will's father "My mill will be turning out lumber when yours is housing pigeons!"

1993

The Waterdown South Railway Station

The coming of the railway to the village of Waterdown resulted in the relocation of the Grindstone Creek to the west side of the valley Much of the project was done with hand labour throughout the summer and winter of 1910 and 1911 The physical changes complete, the tracks were laid on oak ties and first class gravel which was quarried in the C.P.R.'s own pit in Waterdown. The actual line from Hamilton to Guelph Junction, a stretch of 19 miles took two years to complete at a cost of a million dollars. The construction workers lived in tents which were located in Smokey Hollow and the surveyor and engineer boarded at the old Post Office on Main Street South.

Prior to the official opening of the C.P.R. Guelph Junction line on July 1 1912 John and Ada Vance's large two storey house was converted to become the village railway station The building also served as the Station Master's home and operated until 1962 when the station closed and the last Station Master, George McKay left.

During the early years of the railway the station known officially as the South Waterdown Station was a hive of activity Students from as far away as Campbellville took the train daily to Waterdown High School. The local farmers used the line to take their produce to the Hamilton Market every morning, and freight for the village and surrounding area was delivered for pick up

Gradually as more and more people began to purchase cars, the passenger service was no longer needed, and in 1950 the C.P.R. discontinued the service and since then, the line has only been used for freight

Railway construction in front of the Vance House c 1911

The Dundas Street Bridge and Waterdown South Station formerly the Vance House c 1912

1994

1993

Dundas Street Bridge

With the arrival of the railway in 1911 the Dundas Street Bridge extending over Grindstone Creek was raised by Fred Carson & Sons. Since that first major structural change to the bridge several more have been required as heavier demands have been placed upon it.

During 1965 1966, while the Gaffney Construction Company was working on the bridge they used the upstairs rooms of the old Waterdown South Railway Station as a storage shed, and the downstairs as an office for their staff. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company arranged with Gaffney to dismantle the station once they had finished their work. When the time came, Gaffney decided that the easiest way to get rid of the old building would be to burn it.

Waterdown Reeve, Orly Gunby and Fire Commissioner, Ted Appleby refused to give permission on the grounds that the village had a By-Law which prohibited the setting of fires in June, July and August, but on the night of June 23, 1966, vandals did the job for them!

Over 250 people stood on the new Dundas Street Bridge and watched the station go up in flames. This closed the history on the Waterdown South Railway Station, and was the last major fire along Dundas Street.

Dundas Street Bridge c 1905

Dundas Street Bridge and Eager's House c 1906

Road work on Dundas Street Bridge c 1922 1925

Looking east up tree-lined Vinegar Hill to the eastern entrance of Waterdown at First Street c.1930.

Road work on Dundas Street Bridge by Gaffney Construction Company c 1965

1993

1993

The Mitchell-Peer House

Peter and Sara E. Mitchell outside their house c 1913. Peter Mitchell owned a painting and decorating business in the village

The Board and Batten Mitchell House. The property, enclosed by a decorative fence originally extended westwards towards the north-east corner block of Mill and Dundas Street

The Peer House c 1982. Mr. Fred Peer sold hunting licences for the area. The house was burnt to the ground rather mysteriously in the 1980's. Later Mr. Ralph Neccarato redeveloped the area with a small collection of specialty shops.

1993

Raphael's Cottage

Nestled between the north-east corner block of Mill and Dundas Streets and the Peer House, a small one storey frame building housed a variety of village businesses. During the 1940's, Mr Elmer King and his son in-law Ted Sherwin, operated King's Butcher Shop from the building In the 1950's the name changed to Sherwin's Grocery and Meat Store and in 1957 the Waterdown Library moved into the premises from the Memorial Hall The Library remained until 1970 when it moved again to the Haynes Building on Mill Street South.

Mr. Ralph Naccarato the last owner had a paint and wallpaper business in the rear section and his wife operated a lady's dress shop at the front During the 1980's, Mr. Naccarato demolished the building, and on purchasing the neighbouring Peer property and house replaced them with a two storey commercial/ residential block containing a group of specialty shops.

Raphael's Cottage, Dundas Street c.1980

1993

The Eager-Weeks Block to Dundas Street Bridge

Between the rear section of the Eager-Weeks Block and the Dundas Street Bridge a small group of buildings owned by the Eager family existed until c.1980. Now almost forgotten, they were a part of Dundas Street's ever changing streetscape that has disappeared with the increasing demands for parking and commercial development.

Double House. Summer 1977. Covered with modern siding, the house was last rented to the Lewis and Downs families before demolition c.1982.

Double House c.1905. Board and Batten construction with decorative fence similar to the Mitchell House across the road.

Looking west to Mill Street intersection from Dundas Street Bridge c.1975. Small cottage and large garage where Eager's cars were stored.

1993

Commercial Section

The Eager-Weeks Block

South-East Corner of Mill and Dundas Streets

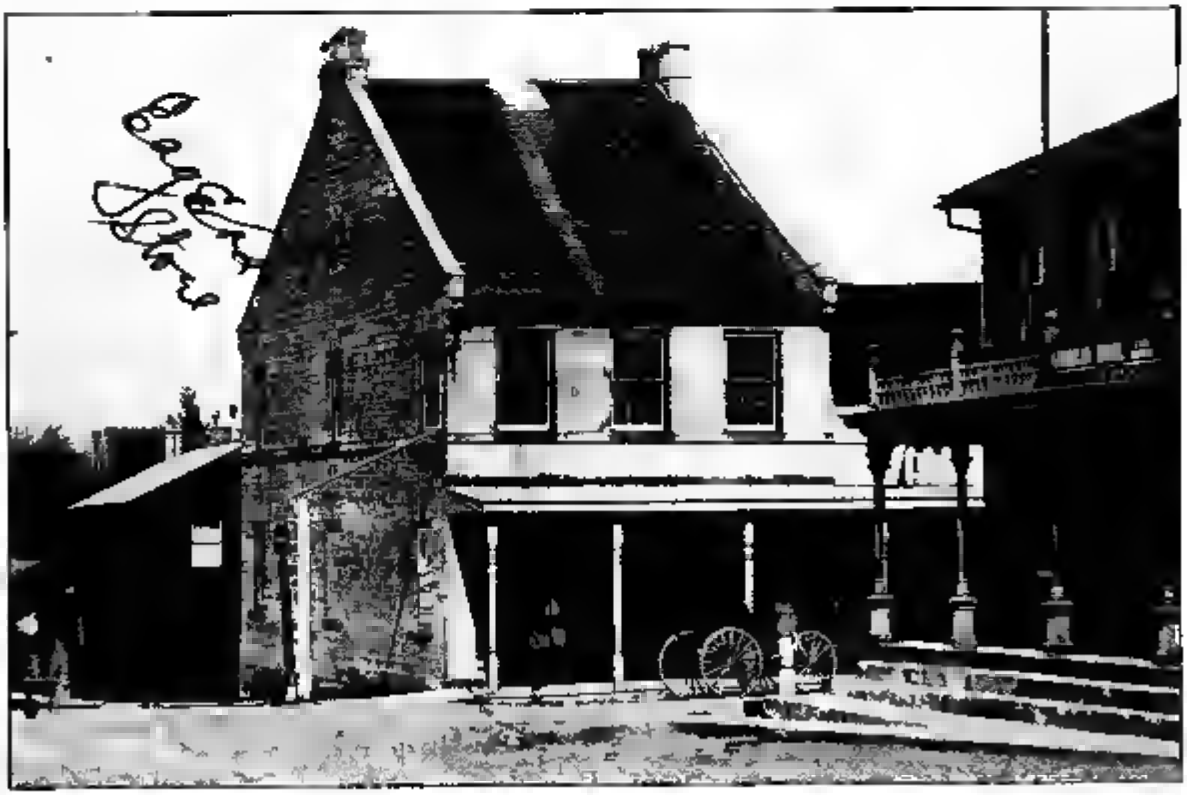
The magnificent stone building on the south-east corner of Mill and Dundas Streets is instantly recognizable to thousands of people in Flamborough and the surrounding area as once being the home of Weeks of Waterdown

The corner building actually consists of four separate sections, although in all probability the entire block was developed at the same time c.1824-1830 Fires, structural changes and additions over the years have wrought great changes and allowed each individual section to have its own architectural style. A prime location at the crossroads of trade and travel in the village has ensured stable ownership, as the building has changed hands infrequently during the past 170 years.

The oldest, and probably the only original section is the impressive corner one with its steep side gable roof atop a parapet wall, constructed of rubble stone, parged and striped to resemble dressed stone Local tradition suggests that this building was constructed soon after Ebenezer Culver Griffin's purchase in 1821 possibly as early as 1824 and that the family operated a General Store in the building until it was sold to the Eager family in 1873. In fact, E.C Griffin sold the property to Daniel Cummins in 1839...and like his brief ownership of the neighbouring American Hotel was probably relinquished because of his involvement with the rapidly developing milling industry in the Grindstone Valley

The second section was erected c.1850 after the original frame building burned and was rebuilt several times The third section was once the site of a detached barn that was used for the delivery horses until the 1940s Demolished for the Weeks family c 1948 the building was replaced almost immediately due to the demands for an expansion of their hardware department within the General Store.

The final or fourth portion of the block was acquired by William Featherston in 1890 who operated a bakery on the premises The previous owner of this section, James Rodgers, also a baker, suffered a disastrous fire in 1883 that not only destroyed much of his bakery but also threatened the rest of the Eager Block. In the early 1900s the rear apartment was added to the building by the Featherstons. Many older residents of the village recall the south wall of the apartment collapsing when the horse barn in the third section was being removed, thus exposing to view the inside of the



Eager's General Store c 1904

Featherston's home. The Weeks family promptly purchased this final section of the building thus returning the whole block to one ownership.

From the 1840s this corner of Waterdown was a popular stopping place for farmers from as far as Guelph who would drive their wagons down to Brown's Wharf (Aldershot) with their grain and produce, and after selling it, return home through the village. For some it was an annual trip during which they would purchase their supplies for the year; for others they would spend the night in one of Waterdown's seven hotels, including one that was reputedly located above the store.

Jessop Pharmacy in Weeks Building, August 1963

In 1873 the store was bought by the Eager Brothers who moved their business to Waterdown from their previous general store in Nelson Township. Both James Edward and his brother Joseph shared the responsibility for operating the Eager Brother's General Store for over 40 years. Although in competition with the general stores on Main Street operated by F.W. Crooker and O.E. Griffin, Eager's reputation for its warmth and hospitality and the wonderful variety of merchandise made it very popular.

American House and Weeks of Waterdown, c.1967

George Weeks purchased the Eager Store in December 1924 and so began the long tradition associated with "Weeks of Waterdown" that saw it grow from a small general store to a unique hardware establishment that was based upon good service and personal attention.

When the family arrived to take up residence, the hitching posts for horses and front verandah were still in place. However, one night after returning to the store from the Township Hall where he had gone to deliver coffee, Ernie Weeks, George's son, heard a loud crash at the front of the store. Looking through the window he noticed the northern section of the verandah roof had caved in from heavy snow sliding off the roof above. Afraid that someone might have been passing when it collapsed, Ernie and others spent an anxious time shovelling the snow off the sidewalk before finding that no one had been trapped.

Besides the usual store merchandise, "Weeks" was once a cheese factory. George Weeks discovered that the temperature in the stone basement of the corner block was fairly constant and remained at the correct level to age cheese. When ready for sale, a length of piano wire

was drawn through the 80 pound slabs to cut the cheese into saleable pieces. These were then waxed to preserve their freshness and high quality. Described as "good old cheese", its reputation brought customers from far and wide to Waterdown.

After George Weeks died, Ernie operated the store slowly allowing the business to progress from a general store to a hardware store that gained an area-wide reputation for the stock that it carried and thus coining the phrase "You'll be sure to find it at Weeks of Waterdown."

Weeks of Waterdown 1980.

1993

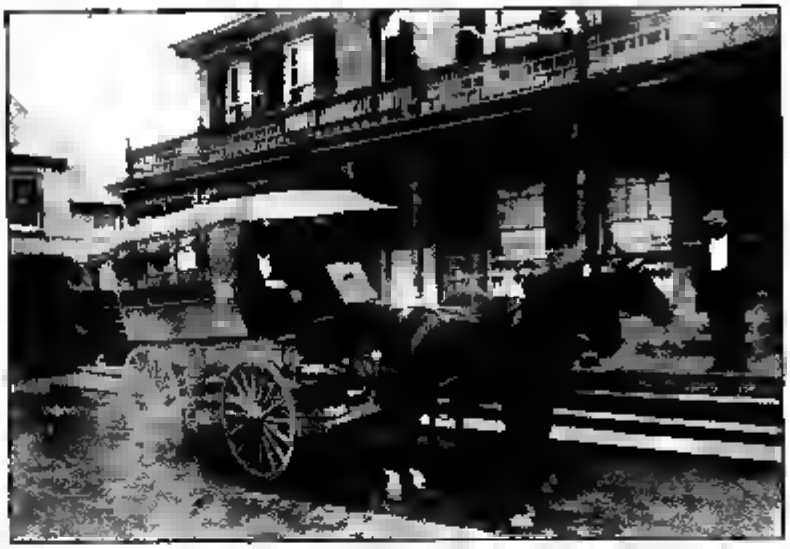
North American Hotel / American Hotel / American House

As soon as the first road was cut through Upper Canada's wilderness, hotels taverns and inns appeared like magic along the way and the innkeeper that "Jack-of-all Trades" in the pioneer community opened his establishment for business.

With the opening of the Governor's Road through the little settlement of Waterdown, entrepreneur Ebenezer C Griffin saw great potential in the area with the proximity of waterpower on the Grindstone Creek and the location of this road The south-west corner, the present day site of the American Hotel, was part of the first piece of property that he purchased from Crown Patentee, Alexander Brown in 1821 Construction probably took place almost immediately as both his General Store on the opposite corner and the Hotel are believed to have been in operation by 1824-1830

By 1829 Plumer Burley of Ancaster had begun a stage-coach line between Ancaster and York that left Ancaster at 4 am each Monday, Wednesday and Friday arriving at York an exhausting eleven hours later In 1833 William Weller's Stage Line was carrying passengers westwards from York So within a decade of the hotel opening, there was a steady passenger trade in place.

Possibly because of his involvement in the Temperence Movement or the developing milling industry that he was promoting, Griffin only owned the hotel for a short period, the property being sold to Alexander Markle, an Innkeeper in 1832.



Stage Coach, front steps of North American Hotel c.1900-1905.

Travelling salesman's wagon and American Hotel Staff on west side of building c 1905

Throughout its long history the hotel has been known by a variety of names, including, North American Hotel and American House It has also been owned and operated by many different innkeepers In Smith's 1846 Gazetteer the Village of Waterdown is recorded as possessing two hotels, one of which was almost certainly the American Hotel, with Mr. Samuel Anderson as proprietor. Possibly because of its prestigious location, this building has remained a permanent hostelry serving the travellers on both the east-west and north-south routes through the area - and thus making it one of the oldest hotels in Ontario.

Among the known owners and innkeepers were Samuel Anderson (1837-1869) John and Thomas Stuart (1875) who had come to Canada from Scotland in 1871 Michael Doyle (1880s) James H Cooper (1884-1885) and Samuel Cook (1885-1904) For a brief period following Mr. Cook's death, the hotel was owned by Richard Morley but in 1911 his widow Mary Cook returned to

operate it until 1926. During prohibition the hotel was closed, reopening in 1933 with proprietors William Condon and F Stanley

Many grand social events have been held in the building over the years At one time, an archway in the Mill Street wall was the entrance to a passageway through which carriages could drive. This allowed the ladies to alight inside the hotel – a great convenience especially if they were dressed for an evening in the upstairs ballroom The archway was later closed in to make an apartment, but for many years after, the outline was still visible through the paintwork.

Early car passing the American Hotel c.1910.

Before the turn of the century the hotel was the site of a winter banquet hosted by Agricultural Implements Agent John Prudham for his customers. This renowned social occasion alternated annually between the American and Kirk Hotels and followed the arrival of the farm machinery at the Waterdown Grand Trunk Railway Station and a spectacular procession up the Waterdown Road.

During the last thirty years the interior of the hotel has been drastically altered both to modernize and serve the demands of the public. In 1966 the wall between the segregated male and female front rooms was eliminated, and during the 1980s, the original wooden floors, tin ceiling in this front section, and the last old-time stand up bar in Ontario were removed But despite these changes the American Hotel continues to be one of the landmarks in the commercial life of the village.

1993

Mill and Dundas Street Intersection

Unlike Main and Dundas, the Mill and Dundas Street intersection has not experienced great change. The building on the north west corner, popularly known as the J T Stock Building, dates from the 1850s and has housed many businesses during its history.

The Waterdown Mechanic's Institute met in the upstairs section of the building from the time of construction, and had their Library there. Although the Institute grew in its early years, membership declined as education became available, and the last meeting was held on May 9, 1884.

The first telephone line in Waterdown was installed in John Stock's store in May 1882, and for the next twenty-three years, this was the only telephone in the village. In 1900 George Reid rented the store for his harness repair business. He worked during the night instead of the day — possibly because farmers would bring in broken equipment after a day's work and require it to be fixed by the next day.

The Trader's Bank occupied the downstairs part of the building from 1909, and in 1911 installed a vault on the premises, subject to the condition that it "was to be removed if and when they vacated". The Royal Bank bought the whole building in 1921, and remained at this location until the new bank was built at Dundas and Main in 1963.

G.M. Reid Harness Shop. J.T. Stock Building north west corner Mill and Dundas Street c. 1900

Looking northwards, Dundas and Mill Street intersection c. 1914

1993

Dundas Street

Looking west from the Mill Street North Intersection

North side showing Metzger's Barber Shop, J. Buchan's Bakery and the Bell House and Tower c.1901-1905.

North side showing Royal Bank of Canada on the north-west corner of Mill and Dundas Streets c.1918

North side showing The Hub Antiques Shop which replaced Huxley Brothers Groceries and Butcher Shop c.1982.

1993

Huxley Brothers' Shop, Dundas Street

The western section of the JT Stock Building has housed commercial businesses for over one hundred and twenty years, probably due to the building's prime location at such a well-travelled Waterdown intersection. Constructed of stucco over squared rubble, the L-shaped Huxley building was designed to house a private residence upstairs and a business at street level — typical of merchant store designs in the 1850s.

In 1941, the Huxley brothers, Dan and Tom, followed T.E. Carey Groceries and Meats into the building. Between 1941 and 1980, the brothers developed a reputation of kindness towards those who were facing difficulties. They delivered produce to customers who were sick, allowed those who were experiencing financial difficulties to pay later and alerted relatives when regular customers did not come into the shop.

Daniel and Tom Huxley outside their Grocery and Butcher Shop c 1940

Mr. Daniel Huxley inside the Huxley Store.

1993

Main to Mill Street

Next to the J T Stock Block on the north side of Dundas Street, Philip Metzger's Barber shop also housed the Waterdown Library c 1900-1905 Peter Perry the High School Principal acted as librarian and set up a reading room in the front of the building where a little wood stove was installed for the winter months.

Metzger's Barber Shop Dundas Street c 1895 Philip Metzger stands in the window of his shop with a group of Waterdown boys identified from left to right as Charles Burns, Ed Cahill Art Featherston, Walker McGregor Herbert Green Fred Smith, Ormand Smith, John Colyer and John Doyle

1993

The Antiques Plus Shop, Dundas Street

Dramatically changed from the date of photographs taken between 1890-1914 the building has housed numerous Waterdown businesses during the past hundred and thirty years.

High in the gable of Edward's Bakery that existed at the turn of the century the name of the Boadicea Hotel can be seen beneath the layers of fading paint. This dates the building's existence from c 1865-1867 Alexander Somerville writing in the Daily Spectator on September 16 1867 following a visit described Waterdown as "lay winking in the noontide sun, one of its sleepy taverns bearing the ancient British name of Boadicea"

Although numerous renovations have occurred throughout the years, the original fieldstone used during the construction can be seen at the rear, and the large baker's ovens used in the early 1900s remain in the back section of the building

Meat Market in the corner section, ownership unknown c 1890

Edward's Bakery c 1900-1901

Buchan's Bakery c 1901 1914

1993

Dundas Street

Looking East towards Vinegar Hill

During the early years of the twentieth century Dundas Street was still a dirt road, but well groomed to accommodate both wagons and automobiles. Sidewalks were made of wooden boards, and several businesses had covered walkways to afford customers protection from the elements. The road was paved in the 1920s, when further work was done on the Dundas Street Bridge and concrete sidewalks were installed in the commercial section of the village.

Looking east c.1905.

1953

The Bell House and Tower Section, Dundas Street

During the early years of this century a group of frame buildings that included The Bell House and Tower, together with several other businesses were to be found in the central section of the north side. All were removed to allow for the construction of the present day Memorial Hall erected to honour the veterans of World War I.

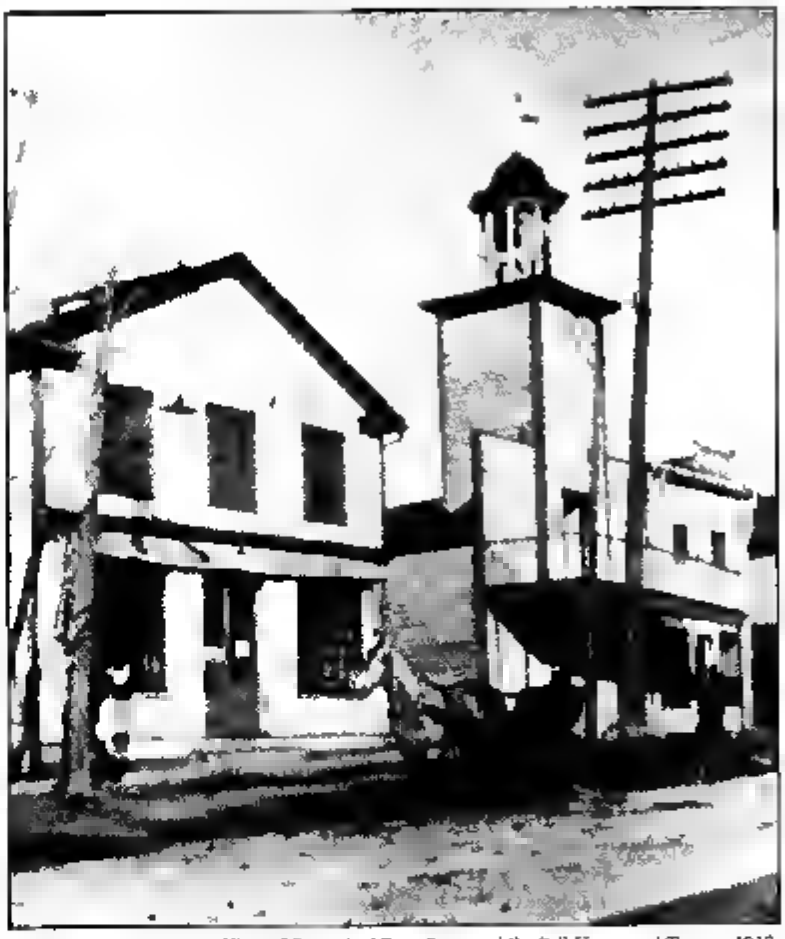
The Bell House and Tower were erected in 1874. The first village election in 1878 and the first Council meeting are recorded as being held in this building. The Third Divisional Court for the County of Wentworth and the Village Lock-up were housed in the building as was the Fire Department's sole hand pumper.

Capping the tall wooden tower was the village bell, tolled at the start and finish of each work day as well as to alert residents of community emergencies. After the building was demolished, the bell, so much a part of village life, was retained and eventually mounted at the front of the Memorial Hall.

In 1920, the Waterdown Women's Institute purchased the site, and with various church groups, undertook the raising of funds to build a community hall. Construction began in the Spring of 1922, and miraculously the partly built structure was not damaged by the Great Waterdown Fire of that year. Some of the workers actually saw the fire that started in the Barrel Factory on Franklin Street jump to the Roller Rink, raised the alarm and then rushed to see what they could pull from the building.

The construction was completed in the late Fall and the Waterdown Review proudly described the hall as "an example of what a small community can achieve when united in a common goal."

The building was officially opened on January 24, 1923, although it had been dedicated the previous Sunday afternoon when a large number of people gathered for the special service and unveiling of a tablet to honour the soldiers who had enlisted from the village and given their lives in the Great War of 1914-1918.



View of Cummins' Drug Store and the Bell House and Tower c 1910.

Lower section of the Bell House and Tower with office of the Watertown Review c 1918.

1993

"Chestnut Grove", Dundas Street

On November 2, 1987, the Town of Flamborough passed By Law #87-150-H that designated this building and grounds at 315 Dundas Street as a property of architectural and historical interest under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Known as "Chestnut Grove", the building houses a number of community organizations serving the Town of Flamborough and is open to the general public.

Built in 1880 by prosperous local lumber merchant, Charles Sealey first Reeve of Waterdown, the house was built around an earlier one. The addition was constructed to face Dundas Street, while the earlier house had faced Main Street. Great care was taken by Mr. Sealey's builder to match the brick work and window openings of the original house so that today only an expert can detect the evidence of an earlier building.

Today the building is entered through a handsome oak door with etched and frosted glass. Many fine interior features remain including a wide Victorian staircase with a decorative carved newel post, decorative plaster ceilings and a magnificent marble fireplace with metal screen. One special feature of the house is the small second storey porch above the front door. A round headed door from the second floor hallway leads onto the ornately decorated porch, allowing a fine view over the village of Waterdown.

Charles Sealey gave the name "Chestnut Grove" to his property possibly from the large number of Horse Chestnut trees that were growing on the land behind his house. Even today odd remnants of these trees can be seen in the neighbourhood. Miraculously this house suffered no damage from the fires that devastated the commercial establishments just to the west of it between 1906 and 1922.

Charles Sealey's House c 1880.

1993

Vacant Property after Demolition of the George Potts House

South-East Corner of Franklin Street

The commercial section on Franklin Street was demolished and replaced by the present day Harper Building between 1977 and 1980. To many village residents, the loss of the George Potts house marked the end of a chapter in Waterdown's history.

In 1913 George Potts moved his blacksmith business from Clappison's Corners to the corner of Franklin and Dundas Streets. For over 50 years he provided his blacksmithing skills, shoeing horses, sharpening saws, repairing farm machinery and iron work. Life was not all work for Mr. Potts, as during his lifetime he made over 100 violins, and on many summer evenings, he could be seen sitting by the pump beside his house amusing himself and others while playing on one of his instruments.

Following his death on March 9, 1967, his funeral was reported throughout Canada, partly because he was one of the last blacksmiths in Ontario and partly because his cortege was accompanied by a mounted escort of over 20 of his customers, a fitting tribute to a fine craftsman.

Vacant lot, Summer 1978

1993

East of Franklin Street

Many businesses have operated along this south side of the street. Among those remembered are: Ellis Gordon's Tailor Shop, Willis Fuels, Mid-Town Laundry, a Real Estate Office and a Restaurant.

Waterdown Cubs march past the George Potts House in the Annual Victoria Day Parade, 1956.

Looking east from Franklin Street c.1965

The George Potts House and Blacksmith Shop

1993

Messecar Bros. Garage, Dundas Street

In June 1938 Emery Messecar and his brother Howard purchased the L & H Garage that was located on the west corner of Franklin and Dundas Street from Harry Lillycrop and Bob Harvey Advertising their business as "Another Progressive Waterdown Firm" the garage operated on this site for almost twenty years

Although Howard Messecar returned to his work as an Accountant in 1940 the garage remained as Messecar Brothers for many years, as another brother who had been working in the gold mines at Schumacher retired and acted as night watchman for the business.

Messecar Bros. Garage Dundas Street c 1938.

Until late in 1946 the garage remained open 24 hours a day and was reputedly the only garage on Highway #5 with a towing truck between St. George and Islington Between 1938 and 1946 the garage would tow a car from the Waterdown area to Toronto for $5 00 even at night During the 1950s Messecar's provided full service to the rapidly developing motor trade a line of pumps, the service of licensed mechanics that included Doug Lillycrop Chester Lillycrop, Emil Baus and "Mickey" Shelton a towing service and membership in the O M L and O A A

On April 1, 1955 the garage moved to a new building further west on Dundas Street and continued under the Messecar name until Emery Messecar's death in 1969

1993

North-West, Main to Mill Street

The commercial section between the north-east corner and Chestnut Grove has been destroyed three times this century by the devastating fires of 1906, 1915 and 1922. Rebuilt following each fire, the block has been home to a wide variety of retail businesses. Some, such as Dale's Alton's and Langford's have returned following the fires but others are only fleetingly remembered – just names in the village business listings

Stories from the 1922 fire abound but those concerning the occupants of this block are especially touching since their misfortunes occurred solely from the inadequacies of the village fire department.

The Bell Telephone in Alf Dale's Store was operated by the Burns sisters They remained at the switchboard for much of the afternoon while the fire raged around the building. Finally Miss Hazel Burns, the chief operator, fearing the building would catch fire at any moment sent her younger sister out, but heroically remained at her post until Hamilton linemen arrived to remove the switchboard as the building began to smoulder. Shortly after the ladies left, the office was completely gutted

The Embassy Restaurant – Country Cupboard Block 309-313 Dundas Street c.1960.

Mr Alf Dale, owner of the store was advised soon after the blaze began to remove his brand new car from the front of Spranger's Garage. Busy fighting the fire at the Roller Rink, he said that he did not think the fire would reach the garage since the village fire brigade was on the scene Before he realized it the fire spread across to Main Street South where his automobile was parked and it was destroyed

1993

Village Fires

The first major fire of the twentieth century is poorly documented. Occurring in 1906, it broke out just east of the Main Street North intersection, destroying several businesses, but not the magnificent Crooker Building on the corner.

Less than a decade later on May 25, 1915, the Crooker Building was destroyed by another major fire. Reported in the Hamilton Herald, the fire which broke out early in the morning, levelled the corner block. Owned by Mr. Frederick Wesley Crooker, it was described by the newspaper as "the finest mercantile building in the village". Included in the building were the General Store operated by Postmaster, Mr. W. Walley, and on the second floor, a large hall and public library.

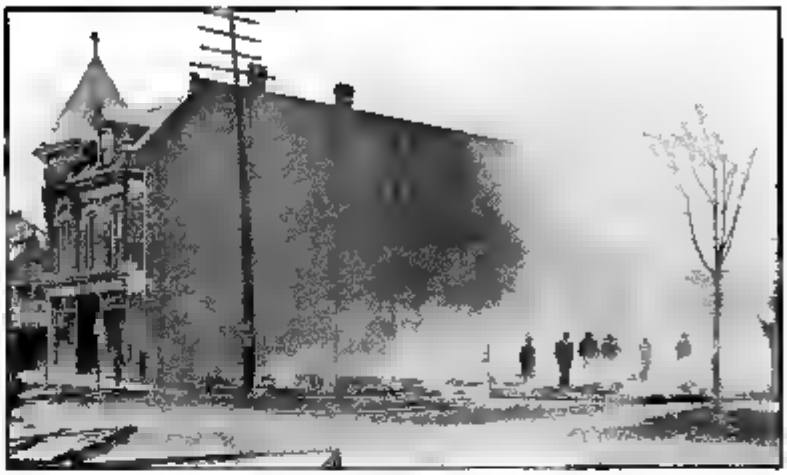
So fierce were the flames, that the adjoining buildings were threatened. Neighbouring Alton's Barber Shop and Pool Room suffered damage when one of the walls collapsed. No one was injured, but several village fire fighters suffered cuts and bruises from the falling debris.

The volunteer village fire brigade although quickly on the scene were unable to cope with the blaze. The Hamilton Fire Department was called to assist, but arrived too late and only managed to prevent the fire from spreading. Ironically activities in the village on Victoria Day had been to raise funds for the village library.

Three years later on September 30, 1918, villagers awakened to another Dundas Street fire. The rear section of W. Cummins' Drugstore, the site of the blaze was destroyed, but many residents who rushed to assist, succeeded in the removal of the druggist's stock.

The village fire brigade managed to bring the fire under control, but the Waterdown Review still commented upon the disaster in the next edition of the paper stating, "this fire clearly demonstrates the fact that Waterdown is still in need of additional fire fighting apparatus, such as ladders, pike poles etc. — Let us hope that the days of the frame fire trap are numbered, and that our Council will pass a By-Law which will prevent the building of this style of structure, which have caused our citizens a great deal of uneasiness in the past."

Just after 1pm on May 23, 1922, the last of the major fires to destroy sections of Dundas Street broke out. Eleven businesses, the Roller Rink and three private houses were destroyed by a fire that engulfed the south side of the street between Franklin and Main Street. When it was finally extinguished by the Hamilton Fire



The 1906 fire on Dundas Street destroyed a tailor shop and barber shop. Crooker's General Store was untouched.

Fire damage on Dundas Street looking west, May 25, 1915.

Department, the damage was estimated at between $60 000 and $80 000

The fire, which at its height threatened to destroy the entire village core, began in the David Davies Cooperage and Heading Mill where a spark from the engine room ignited a pile of sawdust in the rear section. None of the employees saw the flames which, fanned by wind quickly jumped to the rear of the Roller Rink. James Hayes employed in the construction of the new Memorial Hall across the road, saw the flames leaping up the rear of the rink and immediately raced to the village bell to ring the alarm.

Within a few minutes the volunteer fire brigade headed by George Cott arrived on the scene equipped with only hand chemical engines to fight the flames which had completely enveloped the rear of the Roller Rink. They succeeded in removing the piano from the front section but little else. As other volunteers arrived, they removed stock from the nearby stores – Carroll's, Sterling Meat Company and Alton's Hardware. Among the volunteers was Mr. Bachelor, who ran from his store without even removing the cash from the till – his receipts went up in smoke, along with his drugstore and stock.

It soon became very apparent that the fire was almost completely out of hand as it quickly spread from store to store. Charles Burns, local agent for the Bell Telephone company requested his switchboard operator to contact the Hamilton Fire Department for help in the hope of saving the residential section of the village. The operator was told that such a request must be made by the Reeve of Waterdown to the Mayor of Hamilton. Fortunately another resident contacted Mr. J.F. Vance, the County Treasurer who had an office in the Old Courthouse and he gave the necessary guarantee to the Fire

Fire damage on Dundas Street looking north-east to Chestnut Grove
May 25, 1915

Fire damage along the north side of Dundas Street following the Great Fire
May 23, 1922

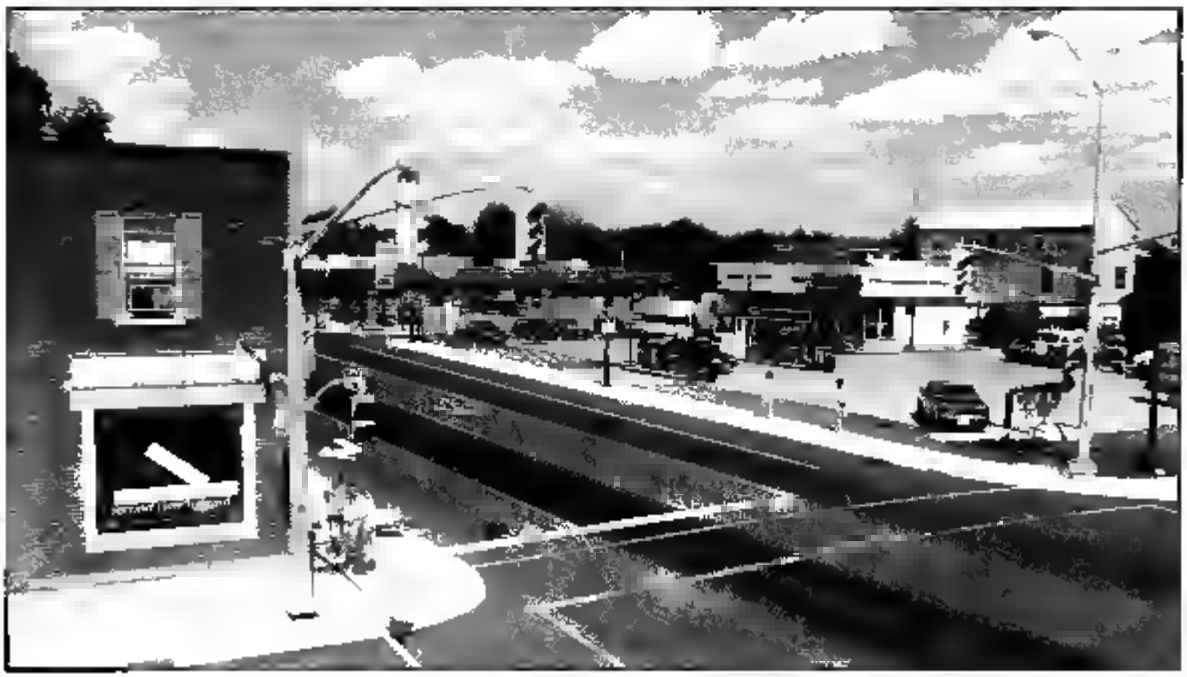
Chief who promptly dispatched an engine and group of fire fighters

The costly switchboard was removed from the telephone office in an effort to save it, but this sev ered all phone communication with the outside. When the Hamilton fire engine arrived in the village, and Deputy Chief Robert Aitchison sur veyed the scene, he quickly realized that there was no adequate supply of water to fight the fire. The dam on a small stream on Dr. McGregor's property was broken and then blocked in the rear of the Kirk Hotel where the fire engine was parked. This immedi ately provided an adequate supply of water and with a slight change in wind direction, the fire was brought under control and extinguished by the early evening.

View from the roof of the Kirk Hotel, May 24 1922

Most of the buildings destroyed were of frame material and these, with the oil and other inflammable materials in the garages, hardware and auto accessory businesses, made the blaze unusually hot and the smoke very dense. At one time the flames, shooting skywards caused sparks to land on several residences to the north and west, including the home of Dr. McGregor. The Kirk Hotel roof caught fire several times, but the strong stream of water from the Hamilton engine prevented serious damage.

At the end of the day much of the village core was damaged beyond repair and the face of Waterdown changed forever.



1993

Dundas Street

Looking West from the Main Street Intersection

View looking west c 1910.

Between 1875 and 1889 the Crooker corner block was operated by William Oscar Sealey the son of Waterdown's first Reeve, Charles Sealey W.O. Sealey who operated a banking business on the premises and lived above the store was involved in one of the most exciting incidents to ever occur in the Village.

During the early hours of April 14 1887, the building was broken into by burglars searching for the location of the downstairs bank safe. They drilled two holes near the handle of the safe, inserted powder and ignited a fuse. The enormous explosion blew open the safe shattered windows and awakened the Sealeys who were in bed overhead. Mr. Sealey seized his revolver and blasted away from the head of the stairway hoping to scare away the intruders. The burglars returned the fire and four bullets pierced the bedroom floor. Several more volleys of gunfire occurred before W.O. Sealey attempted to open a side window and call for help. Gunfire from the street struck the sash, but missed Mr. Sealey. Realizing that the disturbance would soon bring attention, the burglars began to beat a retreat two running northwards, and two to the south across the Dundas Street intersection. The two who ran north carried the drawers from the safe full of valuable papers, eventually throwing them down under the Dundas Street bridge where they were found later that morning.

1993

The North-East Corner of Dundas and Main Street Intersection

Looking East Towards Vinegar Hill

The north-east corner of Main and Dundas Street has been "home" to many long-time family businesses that have been an important part of village history

The Crooker family appear to have operated commercial establishments in Waterdown from an early date. In 1853 Francis Crooker appears on a list of trades and businesses in the village as a grocer and baker. In the listing for 1857-58, his name appears as "dealer in dry goods, hardware and groceries." It is not known if this corner was the location of the store, but Crookers appear continuously in the Directory Listings of the village from this date onwards as merchants, general store owners and druggists.

Frederick William Crooker built the very fine brick building that bore the Crooker name and graced this corner from the turn of the century The building survived the 1906 village fire but was badly damaged during the second in 1915

The corner was rebuilt by Mr. Crooker, and for a short period he continued in business serving as Postmaster until 1927 However his interest moved onto local politics and he served as Reeve of Waterdown from 1924 until his death in 1927

The Dale family became owners of the corner block after the 1915 fire living in the house behind the store. They too operated a business, selling groceries and meats, and providing a delivery service throughout the village Rebuilding the store after the Great Fire of 1922, they only stayed for another year before selling the corner building to W E."Wilf" Langford.

Mr Langford had come to Waterdown after graduating from the Ontario College of Pharmacy in 1921 and set up his own business in one half of the Alton Grocery Store. After this building was destroyed in 1922, he moved two doors down the street into the rebuilt Dale's store

Langford's Pharmacy continued at this location for 64 years and like the Weeks building at Mill and Dundas, could be called one of the village landmarks Remembered for its virtually unchanged store front, soda fountain and friendly staff the drug store closed its doors on May 31 1986 and moved into the new Waterdown Plaza

F W Crooker's General Store north-east corner c.1911

Alf Dale's General Store north-east corner c 1918-1920

Hazel and Myrtle Dale outside their father's General Store 1921

Alf Dale's General Store north-east corner c 1923

Wilfrid Langford's Drug Store c.1932

1993

Dundas and Main Street Intersection

Looking Northwards

Crooker General Store c.1895

Kirk Hotel and Crooker's General Store c 1900

John Prudham's Delivery Service outside the Kirk Hotel c.1906. Horse drawn sleighs and wagons await the arrival of mail and parcels at Mr. Crooker's General Store opposite

1993

South-East Corner of Dundas and Main Street

The majority of the buildings along this south side of Dundas Street, which were largely constructed of wood remained virtually unchanged until the Great Fire of 1922 The south-east corner has been the site of commercial establishments throughout the history of the village–Orley B Griffin s General Store was one of the few village businesses to retain a covered walkway into the twentieth century However, the 1922 fire destroyed both Mr. Griffin's General Store and residence –thus corner suffering complete devastation.

Looking east from the Dundas and Main Street intersection c 1905

In January 1930 Harry Lillycrop and Bob Harvey opened a garage business on Dundas Street known as the L. & H Garage Originally located in George Potts' Blacksmith shop on the east side of Franklin Street for a year, while Mr Potts contemplated retirement in his northern cottage, the two mechanics moved into Alton's Garage on the corner of Franklin and Dundas Street, when he decided to "unretire" During its years of operation, the L. & H. Garage complex included a set of pumps, towing and repair service and an independent diner.

Interior of Orley B Griffin's General Store c 1921

L & H Garage owned by Harry Lilleyman and Bob Harvey, south west corner of Dundas Street and Franklin Street c 1933

1993

North-West Corner of Main and Dundas Street

Hotels have been an important part of Waterdown's history from its earliest days. As the village prospered, the number of hotels dramatically increased, and as it declined, so did the hotels.

The Kirk Hotel situated on the north west corner of Dundas Street and Main Street North is the village's second prominent hotel. It has been a popular "watering hole" for locals since the last decade of the nineteenth century. Unlike the American Hotel it has undergone very little change since its early days, and still retains many of its original exterior features, a reflection of stable family ownership that operated the establishment for almost a century.

The property was originally granted to Alexander McDonnell, and then passed through the ownership of Alexander Brown and E.C. Griffin. In 1862, this north west corner was purchased by Thomas English, a prominent local inhabitant, a carriage manufacturer and donor of the property on which the original St. Thomas Roman Catholic Church was built. This corner was the location of his carriage works, but in 1868 the property was sold to William Heisse. In the same year Heisse was recorded as a Hotel Keeper although no name for the establishment was given until 1875 when he was listed as the Proprietor of the Right House Hotel.

In 1888 Patrick Kirk purchased the property and it remained in his family's possession until 1966 passing through three generations of the Kirk family. Soon after the family assumed ownership they converted the frame hotel to a brick building. Patrick Kirk added a kitchen and pantry at the rear and four rooms to the front of the building. This enlargement of the original hotel building being necessary to serve the increasing village traffic, as the Kirk was a stop on three different stage coach routes that passed through Waterdown.

At this time, the hotel grounds extended to just beyond the present village Post Office, but the wooden stables and large barn that fronted onto Main Street and appear on several turn of the century postcards have been demolished. Many village residents still recall the

The Kirk Hotel c 1920

1993

open area north of the hotel with trees a small rustic bridge and stream that until the 1950s ran south from the McGregor estate on Main Street and meandered across the Kirk property before disappearing under the hotel building. Water from this stream was reputedly used to help douse the Great Fire of 1922. Sadly the stream has been led into a drain and the trees removed to make way for the present parking lot.

When Patrick Kirk died in 1897, his son John Henry Kirk and his wife Annie Isabella Organ took over the operation of the hotel. During these early years, the hotel was one of the sites of John Prudham's annual winter banquets — this was the time when whisky cost 3 cents a glass, and to reserve a hotel room cost $1.50 a day.

After the Great Fire of 1922, the Bell Telephone centre was installed in the hotel, and remained there until 1931. John Henry Kirk died in 1944, and for three years his son John Leo Kirk operated the hotel, before his ill health forced his sister Mary to take on the responsibilities. She continued the family ownership until 1966 when it was sold out of the Kirk family. In 1990 the Morgunov family of Toronto took possession and undertook the task of a major facelift to a building that has been an important village landmark throughout its existence.

Dundas Street

Looking East Towards the Village Core

The large two storey stone house that stood on the south west corner of Main and Dundas Streets was demolished in 1962 prior to the erection of the Royal Bank building in the following year. Village resi dents recall several notable families occupying the house, including the Spences Carsons Johnsons, and Attridges.

Looking east from Flamboro Street c.1909

Looking east from the Royal Bank, Main and Dundas Street, Spring 1967

1993

Residential Section

Dundas Street

Looking East from Flamboro Street

Sidewalks were still made from boards during the first decade of the twentieth century. Slightly contoured to allow for drainage the road was dusty in the summer, and bumpy and full of pot holes as the frost came out each spring. Maintenance with horse teams operated by Jack Buchanan, Davy Davies, and the Slaters continued all summer. Using wagon boxes filled with stones that were dumped onto the highway and then crushed by steam rollers, it was backbreaking labour. During very dry periods, the road surface was oiled or dampened down to improve visibility.

Gas lighting was in place at the turn of the century with standards located at the Mill and Main Street intersections. Electricity came to Waterdown when Sir Adam Beck addressed a mass meeting in the Roller Rink, and officially turned on the hydro September 1911.

View of Dundas Street looking eastwards from Flamboro Street c 1909. Mr. Crooker's General Store on the north-east corner of Dundas and Main Street, Cummins' Drug Store and the Bell House-Tower.

1993

The Crooker House, 299 Dundas Street

Built in 1884 for successful Waterdown merchant and druggist William H. Crooker descendent of an early Flamborough family this large Victorian mansion is surrounded by attractive grounds. Ownership of the property passed to W.H. Crooker's son at the turn of the century. Frederick W. Crooker also assumed operation of his father's general store at the corner of Main and Dundas Street until it was destroyed by fire in 1915. He served as Waterdown's Postmaster 1906-1927 and as Reeve of the village from 1924 until his death in 1927. He was a popular hard working politician, and through his efforts the waterworks system in Waterdown was installed by Fred Carson & Sons.

During the 1940's and 1950's the house was the residence and office of Dr. Reginald Perkins from Hamilton. Lovingly restored to its Victorian splendour by the present owner the house is now a commercial establishment known as "The Parlour".

Side view of the Crooker House c 1920.

Crooker House from Dundas Street c 1977

1993

Hamilton to Main Street

This small one-and-a half storey house in the residential section of Dundas Street appears to have been painted white for much of its life. Constructed of stone blocks over which stucco and paint have been applied. Its style is that of a typical Ontario house of the 1860-1875 period with upper windows in the gable ends and a central gable above the front entrance.

From time to time commercial businesses have been located in the lower section of the building, with the upper floor serving as a residence. Village residents recall a seamstress and two elderly bachelor brothers living in the house in the late 1930s.

The White House, 297 Dundas Street c 1977

1993

Methodist New Connexion Church – Maycock House

In 1859, one-fifth of an acre of land on the corner of Dundas and Flamboro Street was bought from Russell Smith and James K. Griffin by the Trustees of the Canadian Wesleyan Methodist New Connexion congregation "for the purpose of building a village church."

A modest stone church was built on the site and opened within a year, but its time as a place of worship was very brief...as fifteen years later the two local Methodist churches united the congregation from this church moving to worship on Mill Street North No longer required for regular Sunday services, the building became the Sunday School for the two churches between 1874 and 1882.

298 Dundas Street c 1967

Mrs Deborah Jarvis sister of Waterdown Reeve, Charles Sealey purchased the building in 1882 and was responsible for its conversion to a private residence No photographs from the era when it was a church have ever been found, so the original appearance is not known Some changes can be detected when the exterior is examined these include the position of the front door bricked windows and the addition of a second storey

The house was converted to apartments during the 1960s, and the Wentworth County Health unit opened offices there and paved over the side yard for parking In 1969 Professor Paul Maycock undertook restoration of the building and property including the installation of the white picket fence and small garden filled with many fine examples of unusual Canadian perennials.

1993

Hamilton to Main Street

An ornate and unusual two storey Victorian house marks the end of the residential section on the north side of Dundas Street. This building is one of a diminishing number of private residences along the street as many of the larger ones have become commercial establishments in the last two decades.

The Smith - Carson House 289 Dundas Street c 1977

The house has been the home of two well known Waterdown residents. During the first half of the century it was owned by Richard "Dick" Smith who served as Reeve of Waterdown for two terms, 1920-1924 and 1932-1943. During his first term of office the terrible fire of 1922 that destroyed much of the village core occurred. While praising the members of the Hamilton Fire Department who "by their indefatigable efforts saved the village core from further destruction" he vowed to ensure that an adequate water supply and fire fighting equipment be put in place. Neither proposal was enacted during his first term, but his suggestion that only fire-proof buildings be erected in the centre of the village was successful.

During the 1950s the property was purchased by Cecil Carson, a son and member of the famous Waterdown company Fred Carson & Sons responsible for many major construction and highway projects in the province including the village waterworks and the paving of the Mount Hope airstrip.

1993

"Maple Lawn", 292 Dundas Street

Located in the centre of the residential section of Dundas Street, "Maple Lawn" is a large attractive two storey house that dates from the late 1880-1890 period, reputedly designed by Mr Souter, a local architect. Constructed of red stretcher bond brick, it has been painted white at some point during its history Several fine features including a wide front verandah decorative bargeboard and round-headed windows on the second floor high in each of the gables that face Dundas Street make this dwelling one of the finest in the area

At the rear is a large brick carriage house and loft and reputedly there is a spring well on the east side of the property Mr. George Allison who described himself as a "gentlemen" on the 1898 Waterdown Voter's List was probably the builder of this Victorian mansion He was a local magistrate and an avid collector of Indian relics many from the Lake Medad area were eventually donated as a collection to the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

Mr. Harold Greene the first publisher of the Waterdown Review lived in the house for a brief period, and it is believed that a few of the early papers were produced in the carriage house During the Depression years the house was converted to a Tourist Home and several out-of town school teachers boarded there while employed at the High School

Maple Lawn, Summer 1977

Maple Lawn Summer 1980.

1993

North-East Corner of Dundas and Hamilton Street

The commercial block occupying the north-east corner of Hamilton and Dundas Street includ ed this white stucco house until the 1980s. A variety of businesses have operated from this building alone. During the 1930s and 1940s a restaurant and garage owned by the Brown family was a favourite "haunt" for Senior Waterdown High School students.

Before the house was demol ished to make way for a proposed Car Wash, it served as the headquar ters of Mrs. Betty Ward's campaign for Mayor of Flamborough in the November 1978 Municipal Election.

Mrs. Betty Ward's Campaign Headquarters, north-east corner of Dundas and Hamilton Street, c 1978

1993

North-West Corner of Dundas and Hamilton Street

Hamilton Street marks the west ern entrance to the Village of Waterdown. The Metcalfe farm bor dering on Hamilton and Dundas Streets was a Market Gardening oper ation that also included small fruits such as black currants. Commercial strip development in the 1950s heralded the end of farming

In 1953 a Sunoco Service Station opened, operated by Jack Hodgins, with "Bob" Williamson and Bill Hunter providing repairs to cars and trucks. The property behind gradually reverted to low growing bush until 1987 when the Rosart Brothers began the development of the Waterdown Plaza, which by 1993 included such businesses as LG.A., Langford's I D.A. Chapters, and the Toronto Dominion Bank

Ruby Featherston Ruth Bell, and Bernice Lemon, Metcalfe Farm, Hamilton Street, 1938.

1993

The Waterdown High School, Dundas Street

In January 1928, students from the upper floor of Mary Hopkins School on Mill Street North in Waterdown walked over to the new high school that had been constructed on the south-west corner of Hamilton and Dundas Street, at the western entrance to the village. The largest gathering in the history of Waterdown near ly 800 people, assembled on February 27 1928 to watch the opening ceremonies. Built of red brick, in the Art Deco style, at a cost of $60 000, with an additional $10 000 for the grounds and equipment, the new school was surrounded by controversy during the early months. The East Flamborough Township Council felt strongly that since the township had contributed 60% of the cost, the words, "East Flamborough" should be part of the school's name.

However, at the official opening by Dr. F.W. Merchant, Provincial Director of Education, the name Waterdown High School that dated from the school's beginnings in 1853 was given. Later in the same year, the School Board relented, and the name was changed to include the words East Flamborough. The name eventu ally became Waterdown District High School. Consisting of eight classrooms a Gymnasium and Assembly Hall for the 250 pupils, it was described as a "progressive enter prise". While the original building had been designed to serve the needs of the community the growth of Waterdown and changes in education during the 1950s necessitated expansion with the construction of addi tions to the main building in 1954, 1956 and 1967-68.

When the first request for expansion, "more class rooms for the teaching of practical subjects" was made to town council in 1952 by Principal F.W. Walden, supported by Deputy William Tyrell, the claim "our young people must be sent into life equipped to the best of their ability and we must raise our sights above cost and think of what is going to be best for future genera tions" was made. A claim that was made again almost four decades later and resulted in a new Waterdown District High School being built on Parkside Drive in 1992.

Waterdown & East Flamborough High School c 1928

Waterdown District High School c 1956-1958

1993

Looking at the intersection of Main and Dundas Street, c 1905-1910.

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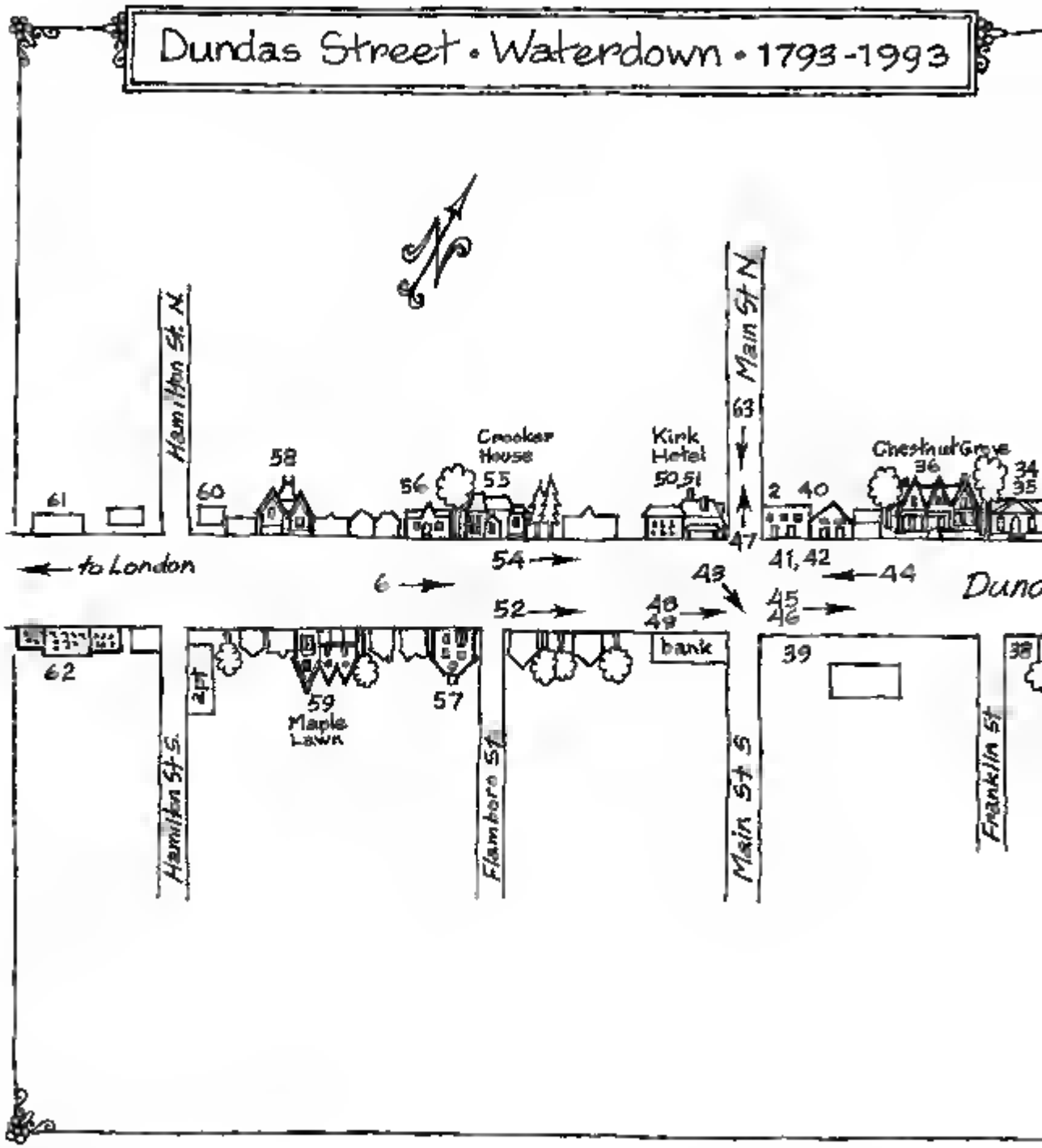
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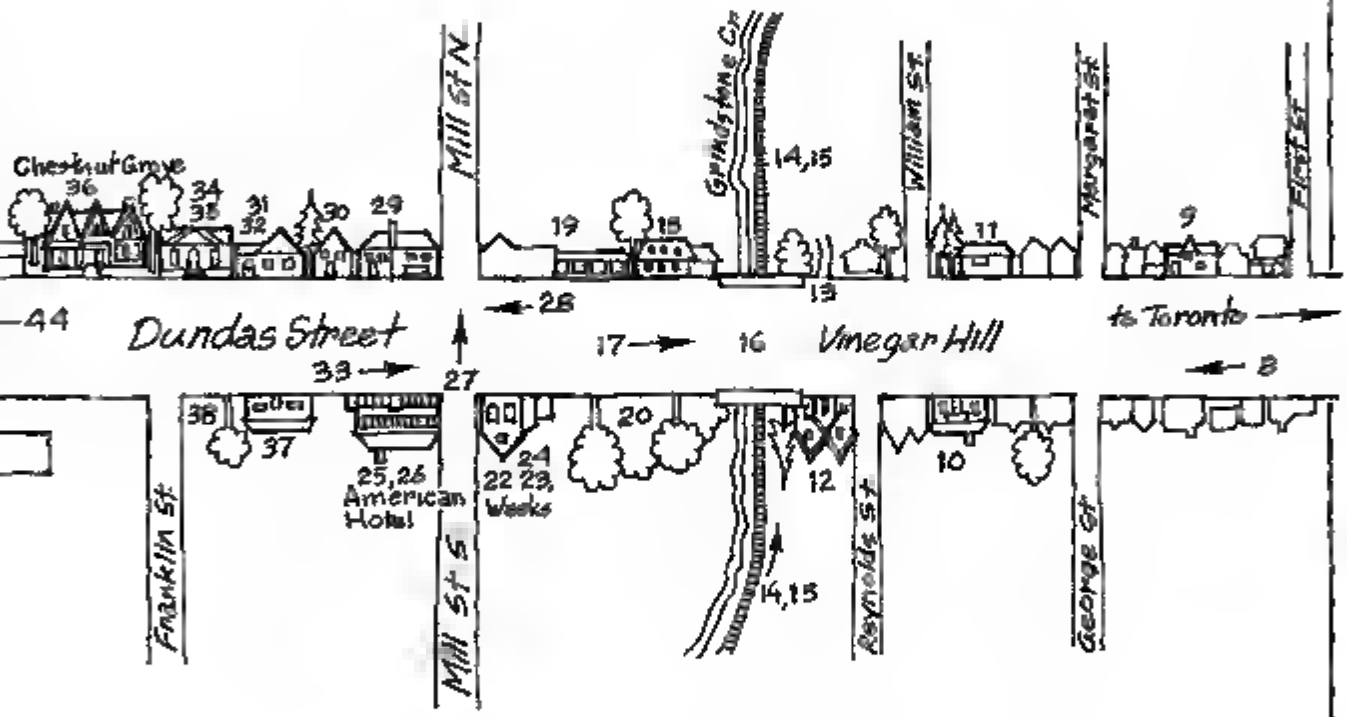

- Numbers refer to page numbers
- → Arrows indicate direction of view
- Map not to scale

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Waterdown

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Waterdown

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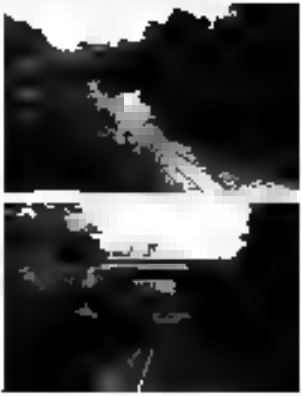
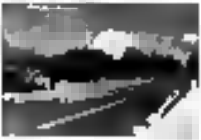
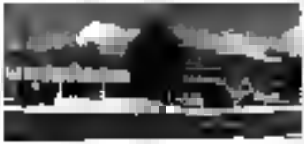
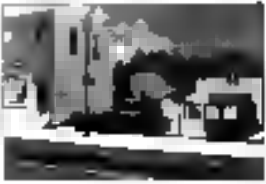
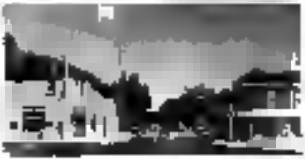


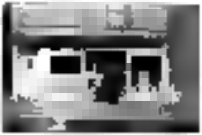


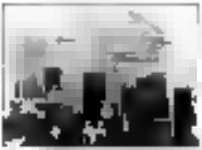


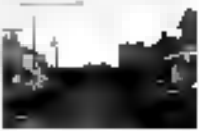


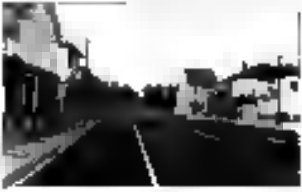
Cut Section

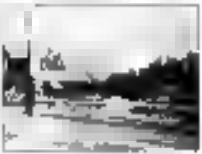


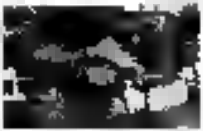












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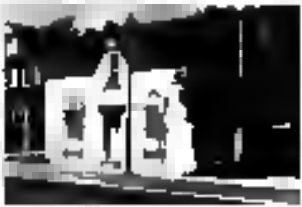

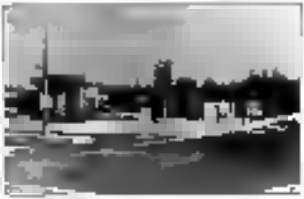

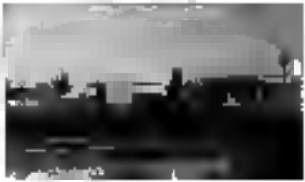

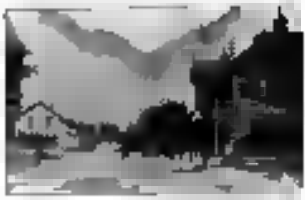

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